

Marx After Marxism

The Philosophy of Karl Marx

Tom Rockmore

Blackwell Publishers

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There are assertions in Marx's theory which have struck me as strange . . . I am far from sure that I understand these assertions aright, nor do they sound to me "materialistic" but, rather, like a precipitate of the obscure Hegelian philosophy in whose school Marx graduated.

Sigmund Freud, "The Question of a Weltanschauung"

Karl Marx is usually thought of as the man who claimed to have made Socialism scientific, and who did more than anyone else to create the powerful movement which, by attraction and repulsion has dominated the recent history of Europe. It is only as a philosopher . . . that I propose to deal with him. In this respect, he is difficult to classify. In one respect, he is an outcome, like Hodgskin, of the Philosophical Radicals, continuing their rationalism and their opposition to the romantics. In another, he is a revivifier of materialism, giving it a new interpretation and a new connection with human history. In yet another aspect he is the last of the great system-builders, the successor of Hegel, a believer, like him, in a rational formula summing up the evolution of mankind.

Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*

The greatest, perhaps the only real philosopher living today . . . Dr Marx . . . is still a very young man and is going to give the death blow to medieval religion and politics. He combines the sharpest wit with the most profound philosophical gravity; imagine Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel united in one person – and I mean united, not thrown together – there you have Dr Marx.

Letter of September 2, 1841 from Moses Hess
to the novelist Berthold Auerbach

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Abbreviations

- B Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, translated and edited by T. B. Bottomore, and with a new foreword by Erich Fromm, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
- CW *Marx–Engels Collected Writings*, New York: International Publishers, 1975; cited by volume.
- G *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, translated with a foreword by Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973.
- GI *The German Ideology* part 1 with selections from parts 2 and 3, and supplementary texts, edited, and with an introduction, by C. J. Arthur, New York: International Publishers, 1970.
- M Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, ed. and trans. David McLellan, New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- MEW *Marx–Engels Werke*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1956; cited by volume.
- N Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. with a foreword by Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with the New Left Review, 1970.

Introduction

This introduction to Karl Marx's (1818–83) philosophical theories is intended for a non-specialist reading public, concerned with recovering them after the end of political Marxism.¹ A new introduction is justified by new circumstances that provide the conditions necessary to understand Marx's theories in a very different way than they have usually been grasped. Some thirty years ago, David McLellan, a prolific student of Marx and Marxism, published a very good introduction to Marx's life and thought.² He justified his book in noting it was the first since Mehring's biography in 1918 and in the meantime the Marx–Engels correspondence as well as several of Marx's unpublished writings had become available. Now, after the end of political Marxism, for perhaps the first time it is possible to present an introduction that depicts Marx not only as beginning to think within, but also as later remaining within, the German philosophical tradition.

Merely because this work is meant for an unspecialized audience does not mean it will be uncontroversial or simplistic. If the discussion is presented simply and in a self-contained manner, even a non-specialist is generally capable of following enough of it to make the experience worthwhile. There is no need to think that an introduction must be a kind of philosophical pot-boiler in which the author talks down to readers.

Nothing about Marx is uncontroversial, except perhaps that he is singularly well known, one of the most important authors of modern times, whose ideas continue to influence the contemporary world and whose theories arguably remain unusually relevant for understanding it. Certainly life has greatly changed since Marx lived and wrote in nineteenth-century Europe. Yet since many present problems are similar to what they were in Marx's day, much of what he believed still applies to the world in which we live. The claim that not only Marx but also his theories are “dead”³ seems about as accurate as the idea that ideology is at an end.⁴ It is probable that his books

will be worth reading as long as capitalism lasts.⁵ It further seems likely that increasing numbers of people who were never associated with Marx or Marxism will, like the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–), become aware of the importance of Marx's contribution for comprehending the modern world.⁶

Marx's theories were formulated to diagnose and to alleviate the insufficiencies of modern economic liberalism. It is, or at least should be, obvious that as a political approach Marxism has failed as a historical alternative to liberal capitalism. After the rapid demise of the Soviet bloc in 1989, and the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991, the opposition between totalitarian Marxism and liberal capitalism, a major influence in much of the twentieth century, dissolved. As a result, the modern industrialized world entered into an involuntary Pascalian wager firmly based on liberal economic and liberal democratic principles. At the time of writing modern economic liberalism literally has no real rival in the industrialized world. Yet contemporary liberalism seems no more able after Marxism than before to come to grips with the main social problems of modern life, which were recognized even before Marx began to write. In the "Communist Manifesto" Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820–95) called, among other things, for a graduated income tax and free education. For the most part these ends have been reached, at least in many parts of the industrialized world, even if flat tax enthusiasts and others who think the rich already contribute more than their fair share continue to arise. Yet many problems remain and new ones have emerged. Adam Smith, who founded modern political economy, was keenly aware of poverty, although he thought that even the poorest worker was better off than what he called the luckiest savage.⁷ The great German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, who was already critical of liberalism early in the nineteenth century,⁸ complained about the inability to abolish poverty,⁹ as true now as before, and warned against the growth of the resentful and impoverished rabble (*Pöbel*).¹⁰

The problem of poverty, which has never been solved, remains a mighty thorn in the liberal side, not only in impoverished or underdeveloped countries but even in the modern industrialized world. At the time of writing, the American economy has until recently been expanding for almost a decade at a rate unprecedented since World War II, yet the percentage of families falling below the officially defined minimum level of income is rising, the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing, and a large part of the American population still has no medical coverage. Although there is much discussion about human rights, there is surprisingly no consensus that universal medical coverage is desirable, much less a right. Despite development, poverty

still persists. Although development has proven useful in many ways, it clearly has not brought freedom.¹¹ It is arguable that now, after the decline of political Marxism, in a period in which for the foreseeable future in most of the industrialized world there will be no alternative to economic liberalism, Marx's theories have never been more relevant.

Like few others before or since, Marx's contributions defy any easy categorization, ranging from philosophy, to history, through political economy, to sociology, literature, and other fields. His theories have been the subject of immense debate in an enormous number of different languages from even more angles of vision. This debate, which runs from weighty tomes to comic books,¹² long ago surpassed the possibility and certainly the desire of any single person to master it. At this late date, when so much has been written about Marx, it is illusory to think that his entire position, and even less the discussion about it, can be captured in a brief book. It is equally illusory to aim at a neutral account of such a controversial figure.

The approach in this study will be resolutely philosophical for two main reasons. First, I am by training and inclination a philosopher, hence best equipped to develop a broadly philosophical approach to Marx's writings. Second, I am convinced that it is paradoxically the philosophical dimension of Marx's position that is now perhaps most significant but least recognized, above all by his Marxist followers as well as by even his most acute non-Marxist and anti-Marxist critics.

Let me explain. Any approach to Marx needs to begin with his relation to Marxism. The latter, which means different things to different observers, is a collection of theories squarely based, not on the views of Marx, but on those of Engels, his close friend and colleague.¹³ Since its inception, Marxism has routinely asserted an adamant link between Marx and Marxism. For historical reasons, political Marxism, which spread throughout the world after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, seemed for so many the best hope for a better life, for some the promise of a radiant future.¹⁴ But political Marxism came to an abrupt, unforeseen, frequently bitter end in much of the world following the break up of the Soviet bloc toward the end of the 1980s. At present, communism, which once ruled more than half the world, remains in power in only a few places, such as North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, and above all in that enormous country, so different from anything Marx was directly acquainted with or even wrote about, the People's Republic of China. There is no reason to believe communism will make a successful comeback in either the near or even distant future, and certainly none to believe that, with the exception of China, where it remains in power, it will ever again become a significant political contender on the world stage. Other than as the study

of Marx's theories and their application to an almost bewildering series of phenomena from literature, through aesthetics, to social theory, history, and so on, the period of Marxism has ended. We have now entered a period after Marxism when, in a way we could not do earlier, we can begin to understand Marx in new ways, unencumbered by Marxist interpretations that have long dominated the discussions of both Marxists and non-Marxists.

On Recovering Marx

The idea of recovering a past author, theory, position, or point of view is certainly familiar enough. Written history provides a series of variations on the theme of the recovery of the past. It has been suggested that history seeks to establish true statements about the past.¹⁵ It is even sometimes thought that history is like natural science.¹⁶ Yet this is implausible since historical events do not recur and do not discernibly follow natural laws. A weaker, more plausible view is that, whether or not we can know the truth about history, there are better or worse ways of writing it.

Since the past has already taken place, the difficulty lies in determining what has occurred and how it is to be understood. Two different approaches to retrieving the past can be mentioned: the idea that the past can be recovered in a way beyond perspective, for instance in a description that merely reports but does not interpret it; and the further idea that the past can only be recovered in a way that depends on perspective, hence that necessarily interprets what it reports. At stake is whether perspective can and should be avoided in writing history, for instance in a description that supposedly avoids interpretation.

According to Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), every claim to know is based on a prevailing perspective, or world view.¹⁷ This idea, which relativizes claims to know to the historical moment, to where we are at the present time, is widely denied. On the contrary, the well-known nineteenth century German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) suggests the need to recover the past exactly as it occurred.¹⁸ Following Ranke, the even more widely known German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) stresses the necessity to address significant philosophical problems, in his case the question of the meaning of being, as they were supposedly originally raised.¹⁹ The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80) attempts in an unfinished study to recover whole the life and work of the French novelist Gustave Flaubert (1821–80).²⁰ These and other writers implicitly assume it is possible to describe past events without interpreting them.

I believe, on the contrary, that there is no way to separate description and interpretation, since every description is an interpretation. There is no way to describe Marx's theories without picking out what is significant in the texts, hence without interpreting them. The only relevant issue is how to approach Marx's position, while acknowledging that any description will also be an interpretation. How should it be described? How should it be interpreted? Is there a difference?

Five Conditions for Comprehending Marx's Philosophical Views

In the window of opportunity opened by the precipitous decline of official Marxism, I see five conditions that must be met for recovering Marx's philosophical ideas. These conditions concern (1) Marxism, (2) Hegel, (3) political economy, (4) Marx's model of modern industrial society, and (5) his own distinctive philosophical contribution. Let me put my cards on the philosophical table, so to speak, right at the beginning of this study. For contingent reasons, Marx's ideas are closely linked to Marxism, a political movement that arose under his influence, and that has always claimed and still claims a privileged relation to his theories. Marxism typically presents a view of his position that is widely accepted without careful scrutiny by Marxists, non-Marxists, and even anti-Marxists alike, but that I believe obscures, transforms, distorts, and renders inaccessible his basic philosophical insights.

It is a matter of concern that even the most informed, most capable interpreters of Marx and Marxism routinely fail to draw a distinction, or at least a sufficient distinction, between Marx and the Marxists,²¹ hence continue to interpret Marx through his followers. This is surely unprecedented and undesirable. One would not dream of reading Plato through the Platonists, or Kant through the Kantians. It seems obviously preferable to read an author's own writings, assuming we possess them, rather than to rely on what someone else, however well informed or well intentioned, might say about them.

Obviously the best way to determine Marx's views is to read Marx. Yet since the abundant literature about Marx reflects a deeply entrenched Marxist reading of his position, and since it is still rare to draw a strict distinction between Marx and Marxism,²² it will be useful to turn first to Marxism – to clear the ground as it were – before only then turning to Marx. Hence, an initial task must be to draw a clear distinction in kind, as difficult as this now is well over a hundred years after Marx's death, between him and those who claim to speak in his name in order to enable his texts to speak for him.

The second condition concerns a thorough reassessment, long overdue, of the relation of Marx to Hegel. Almost everyone who writes on Marx feels constrained to say something about Hegel. But what is said is often minimal, sometimes very minimal, in most instances not very informative, by writers who are themselves insufficiently informed, or again who fail to reflect on, or on occasion are not well placed to grasp, the singular importance of Hegel. The latter is not merely someone against whom Marx reacted, whose mistakes he corrected; he is rather someone whose ideas remain tightly woven into the warp and woof of Marx's mature theories.²³ It is a truism that Hegel was one of the few real philosophical giants, the author of a philosophical position of enormous and continuing influence. As Marx was forging his conceptual arms, Hegel dominated the philosophical debate in a way that is now difficult to comprehend. Marx's theories took shape within the wider context of Hegel's position, which he did not, could not, which perhaps even we cannot, escape.²⁴ For various reasons, Marxists, even the most philosophically competent among them, routinely present Marx as allegedly simply shattering, or at least breaking out of, the confines of Hegel's position, at a minimum of leaving Hegel's theories (regarded as incapable of comprehending social reality) in his wake in the course of leaving philosophy behind.²⁵

Marx's theories also should not be regarded on a positivistic scientific model as resolving philosophical problems on an extra-philosophic, scientific plane. This positivistic approach simply blocks a reasonable grasp of Marx's position, charitably construed. Marx's critical effort to deal with Hegel, in itself a wonderful example of the conceptual clash of two of the most powerful minds of the nineteenth century, commenced as soon as he began to write. It continues as a central theme in his writings from beginning to end. Marx's own theories should be regarded as the result of his lifelong effort to think through, to react against, to criticize, to appropriate, to further elaborate, and to carry through some of Hegel's most significant insights into modern society. It is an important mistake to understand Marx as located "outside" of and squarely opposed to Hegel's views; we should rather regard him as located "within" and working out some Hegelian views while criticizing or rejecting others, which he may or may not understand.

Hegel is a philosophical giant, but only a philosopher. In claiming that Marx is finally a Hegelian, I am not claiming that Marx is only a philosopher. It is an indication of his enormous stature as a thinker that his theories cannot simply be confined to philosophy, to economics, to politics, or indeed to any other single field. Like only a few others, he ranges widely and restlessly across artificial boundaries. Here as well as later in the book I will be using the term "economic" in a wide, now unusual sense to refer to the kind of

discipline whose most important modern impetus derives from Adam Smith and that for Marx, but not for our contemporaries, is inseparable from politics in general.

The philosophical dimension of Marx's position cannot be separated from its economic dimension. Hence, a third condition is to see that Hegel's influence on Marx is absolutely crucial for the latter's critique of political economy. Kant is an ahistorical thinker and Hegel is a profoundly historical thinker. The main difference between Kant and Hegel lies in the latter's turn to history. Post-Kantian German idealism takes an increasingly historical turn in the wake of the French Revolution. Hegel's deeply historical perspective determines Marx's own historical critique of political economy. After the early 1840s, Marx studies the writings of contemporary economists in great detail. He never later swerves from this path in the course of working out his own position. He raises many interesting objections in discussing political economy. But his central idea, which he takes over from Hegel, is that, despite what political economists may say or think, this science is intrinsically historical.

The fourth condition is to comprehend that the same historical perspective that determines Marx's critique of political economy also determines the nature of Marx's rival theory of modern industrial society. Modern economics studies industrial society since the industrial revolution. Marx proposes an account of modern industrial society based on a historically contingent form of private property, or the private ownership of the means of production, which he like others sees as the defining characteristic of capitalism. The central idea in his own rival economic theory is not his theory of value, nor his account of commodities, nor again his conception of alienation, nor even his view of the fetishism of commodities. It is rather the decisive insight, based on Adam Smith and developed in part by Hegel, that modern society is a transitory stage arising from the efforts of individuals to meet their needs within the economic framework of the capitalist world.

These four conditions must be met in order now at this late date to begin to recover Marx, more precisely in order to take the measure of the fifth condition, that is, his own distinctive contribution to the philosophical discussion. The Marxist view of Marx so widely accepted across the board makes it exceedingly difficult to evaluate his ideas as philosophical at all, which they simply could not be if he had left philosophy behind. Nor can Marx's philosophical insights be measured in isolation as if his theory were *sui generis*, finally unrelated to the preceding and succeeding debate. They can only be identified and studied when we see the way in which they emerged in the debates of his own time.

I will be concentrating on recovering Marx's philosophical ideas not in opposition to but rather within the larger Hegelian framework. There is no consensus about what constitutes philosophy. Different philosophers inevitably understand what they do differently. Different understandings of the nature of philosophy will obviously lead to different selections from Marx's enormous corpus as relevant to a philosophical treatment of his position. Any choice of texts necessarily reflects my own view of philosophy and the way it is or is not exemplified in various Marxian writings. Other selections, other treatments, and other evaluations of Marx's philosophy cannot be excluded except in arbitrary fashion. Indeed, one measure of the success of this book might be its capacity over time to elicit other strictly philosophical readings of Marx's position.

Notes

- 1 To avoid misunderstanding, let me state as clearly as I can that, as distinguished from a political approach, which is now moribund, that as an intellectual approach Marxism is still very interesting. There is much strong recent work in the emerging field of analytic Marxism, in the wake of G. A. Cohen, including such authors as John Roemer, Jon Elster, Allen Wood, Sean Sayers, and Roy Bhaskar. G. A. Cohen has written on history (*Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978); John Roemer has contributed to economic theory (*Analytical Foundations of Marxian Economic Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Jon Elster has worked out a rational choice approach to Marxism (*Making Sense of Marx*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Sean Sayers has contributed to the interface between dialectic and theory of knowledge (*Reality and Reason: Dialectic and the Theory of Knowledge*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1985); Roy Bhaskar has been working out a critical realist approach to philosophy of science (*Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, London: Verso, 1993); and Allen Wood has written a historically informed, systematic study of Marx (*Karl Marx*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).
- 2 See David McLellan, *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought*, New York: Harper and Row, 1973.
- 3 See Jean-Marie Benoist, *Marx est mort*, Paris: Gallimard, 1970.
- 4 See Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology*, New York: Collier Books, 1962.
- 5 See John Cassidy, "The Return of Karl Marx," in *The New Yorker*, October 20 and 27, 1997, p. 255.
- 6 See Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx, l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale*, Paris: Editions Galilée, 1993.

- 7 See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan, New York: Modern Library, 1937, p. lviii.
- 8 See Steven B. Smith, *Hegel's Critique of Liberalism: Rights in Context*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- 9 See *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, §245, p. 150.
- 10 See *ibid.*, §242, p. 149.
- 11 See Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
- 12 See Rius, *Marx For Beginners*, trans. Richard Appignanesi, New York: Pantheon, 1976.
- 13 I agree with Rubel, who writes: "Le marxisme n'est pas venu au monde comme un produit authentique de la manière de penser de Karl Marx, mais comme un fruit légitime de l'esprit de Friedrich Engels." "Point de vue: A Propos du thème: 'Engels fondateur'," in Maximilien Rubel, *Marx, critique du marxisme*, Paris: Payot, 1974, p. 19.
- 14 See Alexandre Zinoviev, *L'avenir radieux*, trans. Wladimir Berelowitch, Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1978.
- 15 See Murray G. Murphey, *Our Knowledge of the Historical Past*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1980, p. 1.
- 16 See Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Herbert Feigl and Wilfred Sellars, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, pp. 459–71.
- 17 See J. G. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967.
- 18 For discussion, see "The Theoretical Foundations of German Historicism II: Leopold von Ranke," in Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, pp. 63–89.
- 19 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Evanston, IL: Harper and Row, 1961.
- 20 See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Idiot de la famille*, 3 vols., Paris: Gallimard, 1971.
- 21 An example is Kolakowski, the author of what is currently the best history of Marxism, but who, other than through a few rhetorical gestures, sees no basic difference between Marx and Marxism in his important book. See Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 3 vols., trans. P. S. Falla, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- 22 A recent example is provided by Brudney, who does not distinguish between Marx and Engels in his discussion of the former's theories. See Daniel Brudney, *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- 23 An example among many is provided in Cohen's study of Marx's view of history, in which consideration of Hegel is almost exclusively confined to the first short chapter of a very long book. See Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*.
- 24 See Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Human Activity*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.

- 25 Lukács, the most philosophically competent Marxist of the century, argues in his groundbreaking book in which he literally discovered Marx's relation to Hegel, that Hegel the philosopher offers merely a mythological view of history which Marx replaces with a view of real human history. See Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973.

1

Hegel, Marx, and Marxism

The immediate task is to distinguish between Marxism and Marx, since it is only in that way that we can raise again the question of Marx's relation to his philosophical roots, in particular his relation to Hegel. This will require us to characterize Marxism and to draw a distinction between Marx and his Marxist followers.

Marxism, which derives from Engels, turns on its account of the relation of Marx to Hegel, which in turn determines a view of Marx as leaving Hegel behind. I believe the Marxist view of Marx is both substantially inaccurate, and that it impedes a better view of Marx's position, including his philosophical contribution. I will be arguing that to "recover" Marx, we need to free him as much as possible from Marxism, hence from Engels, the first Marxist. This will allow us to comprehend Marx's relation to Hegel in a substantially richer and very different fashion in revealing Marx's continued dependence on central Hegelian insights. For reasons to be specified below, I believe that Marx is one of the most important but least understood philosophers. Since Marx is mainly understood in Marxist terms, there is a grain of truth in the admittedly extreme claim that Marxism is the series of misunderstandings of Marx's theories.¹

On Distinguishing Between Marx and Marxism

Marxism is anything but simple. In fact it is highly complex, controversial, and, in virtue of its protean nature, difficult to describe briefly. The views of Marxism depend on the authority cited. According to Perry Anderson, Marxism is important because of its sheer intellectual scope, as a theory of historical development, and as a political call to arms.² Yet all three reasons are suspect. First, there are other wide-ranging theories that one might decline

to endorse. Second, in an important sense Marxism, which features a reflection theory of knowledge, is anti-historical. And, third, there are numerous political calls to arms one might reasonably decline to answer.

It would be an obvious mistake simply to condemn Marxism, which has been politically powerful, sometimes enlightened, but also politically harmful in many ways,³ sometimes intellectually creative but very often intellectually stultifying or worse. But if the concern is Marx's philosophy, the situation is somewhat different. I believe Marxism tends to obscure, even to hide, Marx's philosophical contribution for a number of reasons. These include the Marxist insistence on the continuity between Marx and Marxism; the Marxist view that taken together they constitute a single unified world view; the Marxist emphasis on Marxism and even on Marx's position as science; the Marxist idea of the division of labor between Marx and Engels, who is often described as the philosopher of Marxism, and so on.

The term "Marxism," which was not used in Marx's lifetime, has been routinely employed since then to refer to a view, or set of views, allegedly common to Marx and his followers. This term seems to have been first used by Georgii Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856–1918), the Russian Marxist philosopher, shortly after Marx's death to describe a position allegedly common to Marx and his epigones. Plekhanov's student, Vladimir Ilich Lenin (1870–1924), the central figure of the Russian Revolution, politically and perhaps even theoretically the most influential Marxist of the twentieth century, defines "Marxism . . . [as] the system of the views and teachings of Karl Marx."⁴ This canonical definition suggests a complex relation between Marx and Marxism, in which the latter is continuous with, hence authorized as, the "official" source of, Marx's views. It is a little like saying: if you want to know what Marx's theory is about you will need to study the Marxists instead of Marx; they will tell you what you need to know. This implication was not lost on later Marxists. Joseph Stalin (1879–1953), Lenin's political successor, noting the difference in the periods in which Marx and Lenin were active, contends that "Leninism" is "the further development of Marxism" under the specific conditions obtaining in "the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular."⁵

There are many difficulties in untangling Marx from Marxism. One is the multiform, varied, persistent, omnipresent extension of the influence of the former through the latter in a bewildering series of intellectual domains. Understood as an intellectual movement, Marxism includes the extension of Marx's ideas to an increasingly wider range of social phenomena virtually across the board. An incomplete list would include in no particular order:

literature,⁶ literary theory,⁷ political economy,⁸ sociology,⁹ history,¹⁰ historiography,¹¹ political theory,¹² religion,¹³ ethics,¹⁴ philosophy of science,¹⁵ psychology,¹⁶ ethnology,¹⁷ and so on, a simply staggering list of fields. Understood, on the contrary, not as an intellectual approach to one or more fields but as a political tendency, “Marxism” refers to the complex political movement following from the concern to work out an acceptable view of political goals and political action.

Marxism divides roughly into official Marxism that, during the Soviet period, ended with the demise of the Soviet Union, was constantly concerned with political orthodoxy, hence little inclined toward conceptual innovation, and unofficial Marxism that, since it was never concerned with political orthodoxy, has always been far more lively.¹⁸ “Official” Marxism, especially “official” presentations of Marxist philosophy, have often been rather dull statements of a politically sanctioned point of view, lacking any real philosophical bite,¹⁹ devoid of more than the most distant philosophical interest. Unofficial Marxist theory has often proven much more lively in applying and developing insights from Marx in interesting, often insightful and occasionally fascinating ways. To take a single example, Georg Lukács’s pioneer Marxist reading of Marx as a Hegelian philosopher is one of the most important philosophical works of the twentieth century.²⁰

Marxism has always insisted on the seamless continuity between Marx and Marxism. This idea, which is omnipresent in Marxist texts, is reproduced in the few available histories of Marxism.²¹ Writing in 1908, Plekhanov contends that “Marxism is an integral world outlook.”²² By the time of the Russian Revolution Marxism in practice had become an encompassing, distinctive world view,²³ very different from anything in Marx’s philosophical writings. A similar Marxist world view later functioned as the basis of so-called state socialism in the Soviet Union and allied countries.

The political history of Marxism is linked to a series of Internationals, which can be described very briefly.²⁴ The term “international” derives from the international character of Marxism. The International Working Men’s Association (1864–76) was a federation of working-class organizations located in Western and Central Europe, founded by workers from London and Paris. Although not begun by Marx and Engels, they exerted important leadership roles. The First International was marked by a struggle against the anarchists, led by Mikhail Bakunin (1814–76), which led finally to its dissolution.

Marx died in 1883, shortly after the demise of the First International and before the beginning of its successor. The Second International (1889–1914) was organized at the International Workers’ Congress in Paris in July 1889

as a loose federation of parties and trade unions. After Engels's death in 1895, the central theoretical figures were Plekhanov, Lenin's teacher and the founder of Russian Marxism, and Karl Kautsky (1854–1938). The latter, an outstanding theoretician of the Second International, defended a deterministic and natural-scientific form of materialism. The Second International dissolved as a result of its members' opposition to the opening of hostilities on the eve of World War I.

The Third International (1919–43), also called the Communist International or again the Comintern, was founded in Moscow in 1919 by the victorious Bolsheviks. Lenin defined "its fundamental principles" as "the founding of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power in place of bourgeois democracy."²⁵ Lenin died prematurely in 1924. On the instigation of Stalin, who later became the Soviet dictator, Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), Lenin's comrade in arms, was expelled from the Comintern in 1927 and later assassinated in exile. The Comintern, which supported Stalin's purges,²⁶ dissolved itself in June 1943 on the grounds that the international communist movement could no longer be directed from a single center.

The Fourth International (1938–) was founded on the initiative of Trotsky and his allies. It still steadily opposes the Second and Third Internationals, which it regards as counter-revolutionary.

Engels and the Marxist View of Marx

The suggestion that Marx and Engels shared a single perspective is correct if it refers to a political outlook, but false if it refers to a philosophical position.²⁷ "Positivism," which is an alternative name for scientism, or the idea that science and only science provides the key to all problems, is roughly the view that all significant questions of knowledge can be settled on scientific, hence extra-philosophical grounds. Anti-positivism refers to the refusal of positivism. Marx's philosophical theories, which will be discussed in detail below, were basically determined by German idealism, especially Hegel, hence anti-positivist.²⁸ Today Engels would be described as a positivist. In typical young Hegelian fashion Engels saw philosophy as ending in Hegel. In depicting Marxism as an extra-philosophical science, he suggests there are scientific answers to philosophical questions. An important but frequent error, basic to the Marxist view of Marxism, consists in regarding Marx and Marxism, or Marx and Engels, as holding the same, or at least a very similar, philosophical position.

What is "Marxist philosophy"? Other than an "inspiration" deriving from

Marx, the term is vague, difficult to pin down, mainly meaningful as a political designation, constantly subject to change on political grounds. Like beauty, Marxism, including Marxist philosophy, depends on the eye of the beholder. For political reasons, Marxist philosophy has often been linked to official doctrine. When the Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács (1885–1971) published *History and Class Consciousness* in 1923, it was correctly hailed as a brilliant Marxist philosophical treatise. Yet it was abjured by its author as early as the following year when, after the translation of Lenin's *Materialism and Empiricriticism* into Western languages, it was correctly seen as incompatible with Lenin's views that, for political reasons, took precedence.²⁹

From a theoretical angle of vision, a minimalist view of Marxism might include two main doctrines: dialectical materialism and historical materialism. In this respect, there is a watershed, a clear difference, between Marx and Marxism. Neither of these doctrines can be found in Marx's writings, into which they have often been read, if necessary by altering the written texts. These doctrines are mainly due to Engels, the founder of Marxism.

Philosophy and science are often considered as the two main components of Marxism. Dialectical materialism is often regarded as the Marxist philosophy, and historical materialism is often taken as the (canonical) Marxist science. Stalin, not Marx, is credited as the author of *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.³⁰ Partly following Stalin's lead, until the end of the Soviet Union primers of Marxist philosophy routinely consisted of an introduction, and two parts: a lengthy discussion of dialectical materialism, and an even lengthier discussion of historical materialism.³¹ Such primers inconsistently characterize the combination of dialectical materialism and historical materialism as constituting the philosophical foundations of Marxism-Leninism, while further characterizing the so-called philosophy of dialectical materialism as Marxist-Leninist philosophy.³²

How does materialism relate to Marx's position? Materialism is a doctrine that is clear in Engels, but certainly less clear in Marx. It is surprising, since the term is routinely used in reference to his thought, that he is not a materialist at all in any of the usual senses. "Materialism" is generally understood as the claim that in the final analysis everything can be reduced to and understood in terms of small particles, say atoms, or sub-atomic particles like quarks, and so on. This view, which has clear roots in ancient Greek thought, underlies much of modern science that relies on the atomic theory of matter. In Engels, "materialism" generally refers to the primacy of the independent external world. Materialism and realism are related doctrines. Realists believe that knowledge concerns the real, however defined, and materialists contend that only matter is real. Scientific realism is roughly the doctrine

that there is an independent real and science succeeds in grasping the real.³³

Engels, who opposed idealism, developed a clearly realistic view. In *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, he contends that the fundamental problem of philosophy concerns the relation of thought and being. In his opinion, there are only two possibilities: either, as the idealists contend, the former precedes the latter; or, as the materialists maintain, the latter precedes the former. Engels favored the second view on the assumption that mind is a product of matter. He also took a realist view of knowledge. According to Engels, cognition consists in a correct reflection of independent reality.³⁴

The reflection theory of knowledge (*Wiederspiegelungstheorie*, from the German *Spiegel* or mirror, plus *Theorie* or theory), which derives from the relation of mind to the independent world, has ample precedent in philosophy in traditional British empiricism. The English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626) believed that under proper conditions the mind mirrors the world.³⁵ More recently, a version of this view recurs in the early Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1889–1951) so-called picture theory of knowledge.³⁶ For our purposes, it suffices to point out that the reflection theory of knowledge, which was later adopted by a long line of Marxists, has no basis in Marx's writings. Marx also never refers to the distinction between materialism and idealism as the central, or even as *a* central, philosophical theme.³⁷

The term "dialectical materialism,"³⁸ often abbreviated as "diamat," does not occur in either Marx's or Engels's writings.³⁹ It seems to have been used for the first time by Joseph Dietzgen in a work published in 1887 after Marx's death, and then again in Plekhanov's *Development of the Monist View of History* (1891).⁴⁰ Dialectical materialism is often taken as the philosophy of Marxism. Stalin calls it "the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party."⁴¹ According to Guest, "the only world outlook which is based scientifically on the sum-total of available human knowledge"⁴² arose from the "negation" of Hegelian philosophy.⁴³ The Soviet primer of Marxist philosophy describes dialectical materialism as a widely based contemporary scientific philosophy.⁴⁴

Dialectical materialism is usually regarded as a hybrid based on the mechanistic materialism of the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment, and on Hegel's dialectical form of idealism. The canonical sources of dialectical materialism lie in Engels's works on *SOCIALISM: Utopian and Scientific* and in *Anti-Dühring*, from which the former study is drawn.⁴⁵ The latter book provides a connected exposition of the view supposedly common to Marx and Engels, described as "the dialectical method" and "communist world outlook" of Marx and himself. Marxists often claim that dialectical materialism

was first formulated in Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy* and in the "Communist Manifesto."⁴⁶ In Engels's opinion, he and Marx were the only ones to apply the conception of dialectic stemming from post-Kantian German idealism as the materialist conception of nature and history.⁴⁷

Engels's claim about a shared view of materialist dialectic is tendentious and apparently false. Marx and Engels had rather different views of dialectic. Engels applied dialectic to nature in his last, unfinished work on the *Dialectic of Nature*,⁴⁸ something of which there is not the slightest trace in Marx's writings.

According to Engels, Marx's contribution lies in extending dialectic to knowledge of history. Yet since Hegel pioneered the application of dialectic to history, in reading Hegel Marx learned the dialectical approach to historical phenomena before he ever met Engels. This is very different from the "official" claim that he and Marx were co-inventors of a single joint view. Although Marx never employs the term "historical materialism," often abbreviated as "histomat," to refer to his own theory, it is routinely employed, especially in Western circles, to refer to Marxist science.

The relation between dialectical materialism and historical materialism remains unclear in Engels and succeeding Marxists. Engels, who accords Marx priority in laying the foundations of their supposedly joint theory through his discovery of the basic principles of economics and history,⁴⁹ correctly implies, as I will argue below, that Marx's work stands on its own. Stalin simply inverts this claim in suggesting that Marx's supposed theory of historical materialism is basically derived from Engels's dialectical materialism. According to Stalin, "historical materialism is the extension of the principle of dialectical materialism to the study of social life."⁵⁰ Since historical materialism follows from dialectical materialism, he implies that Engels, not Marx, is the founder of Marxism, which underlies even Marx's view. This reading of the relation of Marx and Engels is not only mistaken, but also impossible, even absurd. It wrongly suggests that Engels, Marx's disciple, discovered Marx's theories (by which in fact he was inspired) on the grounds that Marx's position is contained within Marxism.

This Marxist view of the relation of Marx and Engels, hence Marx and Marxism, is widely and certainly uncritically reproduced throughout the Marxist, non-Marxist, and anti-Marxist discussion. It is as if those interested in, or on the contrary, disinterested in, or even opposed to, Marx were correct to indulge in non-scholarly forms of special pleading. Marxists are eager to leave philosophy, which they often regard as ideology, behind; non-Marxists, content to be philosophers, like to deny this status to Marxism, whose followers also routinely deny it in describing their own views. Plekhanov,

who was a Marxist philosopher, describes the (common) view of socialism in Marx and Engels as “not only an economic doctrine but a world outlook.”⁵¹ According to the Soviet primer of Marxism, in the theory of historical materialism Marxism formulates the (scientific) laws of social development.⁵²

Engels often suggests that Marx is responsible for the extra-philosophical, scientific component of Marxism. Two of the more important passages occur in Engels’s famous eulogy at Marx’s graveside and in his little book on Feuerbach. In the eulogy, Engels generously but also mistakenly compares Marx to Darwin. He claims that Marx “discovered the law of development of human history,” which presumably means that economics is prior to anything else, as well as “the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production and bourgeois society that this mode of production has created.”⁵³ This is mistaken, since Marx never claims to uncover, discover, or formulate the laws of motion of capitalism, which he studies in detail and whose anatomy he did so much to expose. Yet in Engels’s opinion, in his capacity as a scientist, but not as a philosopher, Marx uncovered the basic laws of history in general and modern capitalism in particular.

Engels elaborated his claim about Marx’s contributions in his little book on Feuerbach, where he sharply distinguished between philosophy and the science of social reality. According to Engels, Feuerbach, who invoked a new religion against Hegel’s philosophy, remained within it. But he was later overcome by “the science of real men and of their historical development.”⁵⁴ Philosophy is inadequate to the task at hand, since it merely substitutes what occurs in the philosopher’s mind for the real links of historical events.⁵⁵ Like religion, so philosophy is merely a type of ideology,⁵⁶ with no legitimate role to play either with respect to nature or history.⁵⁷ In *Anti-Dühring* Engels, who does not employ the term “historical materialism,” describes the materialist conception of history, which was presumably discovered by Marx, as the view that the production of commodities is the basis of society.⁵⁸ Yet, as will emerge below, it is entirely consistent to hold that for Marx the production of commodities is indeed basic to modern society, while also acknowledging that this insight is essentially philosophical.

Marx and Engels

A main reason to believe that Marx and Engels are the joint authors of a single shared doctrine lies in the close association of the former with the latter. That is a little like saying that people who hang out together must think alike. Yet continued association, even explicit claims for the joint defense of

a single shared position, is no guarantee that any two writers defend a similar, much less an identical, set of (philosophical) ideas.

The sources of this Marxist myth undoubtedly lie in the close relation between Marx and Engels, once they met in the 1840s, over some four decades until the end of Marx's life. Since Marx mainly devoted himself to his studies, Engels was for many years the most important source of financial support for Marx and the Marx family. The relation between them was certainly not limited to finances. It has already been pointed out that Marx and Engels shared a political program which can be succinctly described as the emancipation of working men and women everywhere. They collaborated on a number of texts, including the famous "Communist Manifesto," the philosophically important *German Ideology*, the philosophically less important *The Holy Family*, and on *Anti-Dühring*, where Engels criticized a German contemporary.

Then there is Engels's easy literary style, and his persistent tendency to offer simple answers to often very complex philosophical questions which have been discussed over several thousand years. An example among others is the question of the relation of thought and being, which has been under debate from the time Parmenides raised it in the fifth century BC.⁵⁹ Engels, who was a philosophical autodidact, set the tone for generations of political Marxists, who are mainly concerned to decide questions, especially philosophical questions, certainly not to debate them endlessly in imitation of professional philosophers. Since he was not concerned with philosophical subtleties, there is almost never any doubt about where he stands on a particular question, indeed rarely any need even to reread a particular passage to grasp its meaning. Marx, who had a talent for striking aphorisms, more often wrote in the familiarly ponderous, dismal style of the German professor he originally intended to become. His texts, which repay close study, also demand it. They are difficult to grasp, require sustained concentration, and suppose an extensive intellectual background unnecessary for Engels's lighter fare. It was then natural for readers, even during Marx's lifetime, to turn to Engels as the source of a supposedly common view. It became even more natural to do so after Marx's death when, as his reputation continued to grow, Engels (as his literary executor), who was still active, was in a position to make "authoritative" statements about what they both meant about disputed points. So in a well-known letter to Joseph Bloch, he speaks of himself and Marx in the same conceptual breath, as it were: "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it."⁶⁰

Access to Marx's philosophical ideas is further impeded by Engels's

suggestion of the division of conceptual labors. Consider the following important passage from his book on *Feuerbach* (1888), which appeared five years after Marx died. Commenting on his own role in creating what he simply but disingenuously calls “the theory,” Engels writes that “the greater part of its leading basic principles, particularly in the realm of economics and history, and, above all, its final clear formulation, belong to Marx.”⁶¹ Here we find the suggestion that he and Marx share a single theory, whose formulation Engels modestly (but I believe correctly) mainly credits to his more talented colleague. In further contending that Marx’s contribution to their common position lay in economics and history, Engels suggests that Marx was a political economist with an interest in history. If this were the case, then Marx’s own contribution should be sought in this domain, not in philosophy, since, as Engels implies, Engels was the philosopher in the team. This implication has often been drawn. Plekhanov, for instance, contends that the final form of the “philosophical views of Marx and Engels” was stated in the first part of Engels’s *Anti-Dühring*.⁶²

The idea that Engels was a philosopher and Marx was an economist has long impeded an appreciation of the latter’s philosophical views. This idea rests in part on a misreading of their respective philosophical backgrounds. Marx studied philosophy, in which he held a doctorate, at the university. Yet Engels did not earn a college degree. He studied philosophy only sporadically, and simply lacked the requisite training, not to mention the philosophical talent, to do high-quality philosophical work of his own. He also lacked the sophisticated appreciation of philosophical doctrines and sheer philosophical inventiveness of Marx. As a philosopher, he was at best a talented amateur with an interest in the topic. Yet generations of Marxists, who also mainly lack adequate philosophical training, have looked to Engels for philosophical insights and, for this reason, away from Marx. An example is Lenin, who, in his early work on *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, his main philosophical text, reportedly cites Engels several hundred times but Marx just once.⁶³

About Marx’s Texts

It is not unusual for a scholarly edition of an important writer like Marx to appear only long after his death. Hegel is a case in point. Although he died in 1831 and although he has attracted enormous attention, a complete edition of his writings has never appeared, or rather several scholarly editions, each of which is incomplete, have since seen the light of day. Yet the publica-

tion of a new, or even of a complete, edition of his writings is unlikely to greatly alter our view of them. At most, it will provide the kind of information which, since it interests scholars, fuels scholarly disputes.

The case is different with Marx, where publications since his death have greatly changed our view of his position. Marx himself published comparatively little, particularly in philosophy. Yet his philosophical position may yet turn out, as surprising as it may seem to those raised on the Marxist myth that he is primarily a political economist, to be the most important aspect of his thought. When he died in 1883, a Marxist tradition was already well under way through the tireless efforts of his close collaborator, Engels. Many of what are now thought to be Marx's most important philosophical writings only appeared later, after the Marxist view of Marx had already been formulated. Others failed to appear, or were suppressed, when they contradicted the Marxist view of Marx, or again were not included even in so-called "official" collections of Marx's writings. Still others have been translated to support a particular preconceived view or have even been retouched in order to make the text correspond to the ideas about it, thereby significantly hindering accurate discussion.⁶⁴

Writings that only appeared after Marx's death, some of which are essential for any grasp of Marx's philosophical ideas, include not only the later volumes of *Capital* and the *Theories of Surplus Value*, his later more economic works; but also the *Paris Manuscripts*, which are central to the development of the view of Marx's philosophical humanism; *The German Ideology*, which for the first time explicitly develops the influential concept of ideology implicit in the earlier writings; the "Theses on Feuerbach" in their original form, where Marx provided a strikingly terse but rich summary of some central ideas in his position; and the *Grundrisse*, which is now often seen as not only central but even as the single most important text in his whole corpus, but which was apparently wholly unknown to Engels.⁶⁵ It is very hard to identify a single major intellectual figure in modern time about whom a received view, a conceptual consensus, arose before the publication of not merely one but a whole series of central texts. These writings belong to Marx's corpus. They play key roles in identifying Marx's position, which appears very differently according to whether they are included or excluded.

The political element, which Marx saw as present in so-called bourgeois thought, has never been wholly absent from consideration of his theories or his own texts. A flagrant example concerns the debate about the proper interpretation of dialectic. The Deborinists, named for Abram Deborin (1881–1963), the losing party in the argument over the proper interpretation of dialectic between the Deborinists and the mechanists at the end of the 1920s

and the early 1930s, lost more than a mere argument. They lost their jobs and in some cases their lives.⁶⁶

There is a strong political element in Marxist editions of the basic texts. It is, then, no accident that when, in his little book on Feuerbach, Engels claims that only Marx was capable of extracting the rational kernel of Hegel's method from its idealistic trappings, the politically orthodox editor adds a footnote contending that Lenin did so as well.⁶⁷

Efforts to produce a scholarly edition of Marx's writings have not so far been successful, often for obvious political reasons. The numerous collections of the writings of Marx often include writings by Engels as well.⁶⁸ Other writings were simply suppressed, since they conflicted with the official political line at the time. None of the various efforts to publish a complete edition of the works of Marx and Engels has so far been successful and perhaps none ever will be. These include the initial effort in the original languages begun in Moscow of the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* in 1927; a second Russian edition undertaken in 1955; the edition prepared in the German Democratic Republic, which was in fact "completed," but which is not even remotely complete; and the English-language edition under way since 1975.

At the time of writing, efforts to produce an edition of the collected writings of Marx and Engels have invariably been based on the Russian edition. David Borisovich Riazanov, the Bolshevik revolutionary turned editor who began the first complete edition of Marx's writings, the so-called MEGA edition (= Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe), and who was director of the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, disappeared in Stalin's purges in the 1930s.⁶⁹ He was later replaced by V. Adoratsky, but the planned edition of 40 volumes never got past the 12th volume. The more recent, but still incomplete edition of the writings of Marx and Engels published in the former German Democratic Republic, the so-called MEW edition (= Marx-Engels-Werke), is based on the second Russian edition and "decided" by the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.⁷⁰

It is no accident that some of Marx's most important writings, now deemed central by competent observers, were silently omitted even from so-called complete editions of the writings of Marx and Engels. The *Grundrisse* was made available in Moscow in two installments in 1939 and 1941, yet it was only included in the authoritative edition of the writings of Marx and Engels (MEW) published in the former German Democratic Republic some 30 years after it had first been published in German in the West.⁷¹ Marx's *Paris Manuscripts*, which originally appeared in Russia in 1929, as well as his two early articles on Hegel, crucial (as will emerge below) for grasping the economic

orientation of his critique of Hegel even before he met Engels, were only added to the edition in a supplementary volume (*Ergänzungsband*) in 1968.

Marx, Engels, and Marx's Texts

Philosophy is a collaborative enterprise in the restrictive sense that whatever view one happens to hold unfolds within the surrounding philosophical tradition, which is always already there so to speak. Yet since there are few instances of important writers collaborating in the preparation of texts, there is rarely any difficulty in identifying their views as their own. The situation is more complex as concerns Marx, who, in the course of his lengthy collaboration over many years with Friedrich Engels, jointly authored a number of texts.

In practice the texts of Marx and Engels have been frequently conflated as the imaginary hybrid author Marx–Engels, reflecting the claimed continuity between Marx and Marxism. It is then no accident that the MEW begins with writings dating from the meeting of Marx and Engels in August 1844, since before this time the famous two-headed intellectual did not exist. The foreword to the supplementary volume of the MEW containing the early writings of Marx and Engels, namely from the period before they had met, refers to them as “both founders of scientific communism.”⁷² The transparent political intention is to protect the political fiction that Marx and Engels were equal co-founders of a single theoretical entity. During the Soviet period, the fiction of the absolute continuity between Marx, Engels, and whoever was in power at the moment led to the authorial monstrosity variously called Marx-Engels-Lenin, Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, more simply Marx-Engels-Stalin, Marx-Engels-Lenin-Mao, Marx-Engels-Mao, and so on. In each case, in different periods the last-named figure was held to be the legitimate heir of the Marxist tradition, for which he in practice functioned as the final and supposedly reliable interpreter.

Since most observers see no substantive difference between political and philosophical views of Marx and Engels, participants in the Marxist debate tend to present them as co-founders of Marxism.⁷³ Yet it is neither necessary nor even useful to conflate Marx and Engels. One of the themes of this book is that as a philosopher Marx can stand on his own and that his philosophical views are worth taking very seriously indeed.

Interpreting Marx's Texts

Interpretation of Marx's theories has often suffered from a broadly Marxist approach which, even in non-doctrinaire readers, counterposes Marx to philosophy, thereby preventing an interpretation of Marx within classical German philosophy. In insisting on a distinction in kind between idealism and materialism, Marxism since Engels implies the need for a similar distinction between Marx and the philosophical tradition. This distinction is often understood as one between non-science and science, where Marxism claims for itself the status of science as understood in the spirit of modern natural science. This suggests an approach to Marx and Marxism based on a distinction in kind between Marx and Marxism as science and all forms of philosophy. This approach reaches a high point in the attempt of Louis Althusser (1918–90), the French orthodox Marxist, to produce a “scientific” reading of *Capital* as if prior readings were somehow unscientific, unworthy of the name, hence false.⁷⁴

The so-called “scientific” reading of Marx's texts advanced by Althusser suggests the possibility of going beyond mere interpretation in order to grasp Marx's writings on a deeper, immanent level. This approach is a variation on the idea, familiar from new criticism to strict legal constructionism,⁷⁵ according to which interpretation need not, indeed should not, refer to the context in which texts arise.

In interpreting Marx, it will be useful to consider his relation to the German idealist tradition for two main reasons. First, as a contextualist Marx insists on the relation of thought to context. To read his thought other than through its relation to the context in which it emerged is to read it against its own grain. It seems better to respect rather than to violate the criteria advanced by the position in its own interpretation. Second, Marx's theories are formulated in reaction to other theories, which were under discussion at the time he was active, and which can usefully be taken into account to grasp his intentions.

There is no alternative to understanding Marx as best we can in his time and place from the perspective afforded by our time and place. Any reading of Marx must occur from the present vantage point. It is never possible to do more than that, and it must be conceded that other readings of his theories are possible. The politically motivated idea that there is one and only one correct reading, only one way to understand his position, which is the justification of Althusser's supposedly “scientific” reading of Marx, is simply indefensible.

Hegel as a Way into Marx

The controversial relation of Marx to Hegel needs to be mentioned early on, and periodically reassessed. Yet it is only later in the book, after a discussion of Marx's main (philosophical) ideas, that a fuller assessment can be attempted. I believe this relation is often misunderstood for doctrinal reasons concerning the supposed difference in kind between Marx's position and preceding philosophy, and because those interested in Marx often have little interest in or knowledge of Hegel.

Engels's influence on Marxism hinders a correct understanding of Marx's relation to Hegel. He consistently treats Hegel as if the latter's philosophy were pre-scientific nonsense. In his little book on Feuerbach, in a discussion of the transition from the Hegelian school to "the materialist standpoint," Engels remarks: "It was decided relentlessly to sacrifice every idealist fancy which could not be brought into harmony with the facts conceived in their own and not in a fantastic connection. And materialism means nothing more than this."⁷⁶ If "materialism" means going beyond philosophical nonsense, then philosophy is nonsense. Elsewhere he suggests that Marx's contribution lay in extracting the true idea from its Hegelian formulation. "Marx was, and is," he wrote, "the only one who could undertake the work of extracting from the Hegelian logic the kernel which comprised Hegel's real discoveries in this sphere . . . in the simple shape in which it becomes the only true form of development of thought."⁷⁷ The two views are incompatible. The first one suggests a distinction in kind, hence a "break," between Hegel and Marx; the second one suggests that Marx remains a Hegelian. The first view is expressed more frequently, more forcefully, and remains more influential. Yet if one holds, not that Hegel's ideas are false, but rather that they can be further developed, then the latter view is closer to an accurate description of how Marx relates to his predecessor.

The political figures who determined the course of Marxism were not often interested in, or competent to judge, such philosophical nuances. Lenin, who refers far more frequently to Engels than to Marx, was severely critical of Hegel in his early work on *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* (1908). He later took a more nuanced position in his *Philosophical Notebooks* (1914–15), where he studied Hegel's *Science of Logic* in some detail, forming a more positive impression of Hegel, whom he came to regard as indispensable to understanding Marx.⁷⁸

Unlike Lenin's later, more clement view of Hegel, later Marxists tend to follow Engels's more schematic, negative view of the great idealist

philosopher as someone needing merely to be overcome. The Soviet primer on Marxism claims to present the form of Marx's and Engels's views as updated by Lenin. In fact it relies on Lenin's earlier, more negative assessment of Hegel. Variations of this approach are widely current outside orthodox Marxist circles. Tom Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel, who deny the allegedly prevalent view that Marx merely provides factual content to fill out Hegel's philosophy of history, claim that the sources of Marx's position lie not in Hegel, but rather in his reading of contemporary historical sources.⁷⁹

Marx is in part responsible for a persistent devaluation of the importance of his relation to Hegel. In a famous remark in the afterword to the second German edition of *Capital*⁸⁰ (to which we will return below), he obscurely suggests that his own position results from the inversion of Hegel's. Since Engels, generations of Marxists have approached Marx's position as the inversion of Hegel's. Anglo-American analytical philosophy, which arose out of the revolt against British idealism, and has traditionally been skeptical about Hegel, usually approaches Marx without consideration, or without adequate consideration, of Hegel.⁸¹ Even Lukács, whose very nuanced treatment of Hegel is the main source of what is called Hegelian Marxism, continues to insist on a difference in kind between Marxism and Hegel.⁸²

A series of reasons suggest the importance of Marx's relation to Hegel for understanding his own theories. First, great philosophers like Kant or Hegel alter the debate in durable ways. Hegel is unquestionably a great philosopher, clearly one of the small handful of the greatest of all philosophical minds. When Marx began to write, Hegel could not be overlooked. If he did not provide all the solutions, he at least offered much of the intellectual framework, much of the vocabulary, and useful hints to which Marx reacts in his effort to resolve the outstanding problems.

A second reason is Marx's close relation to the young Hegelians. Hegelianism did not die, although it was quickly transformed when Hegel died suddenly during a cholera epidemic in 1831. Shortly after his death, his school shattered into three main fragments: the center Hegelians, or so-called old Hegelians, and those of the right and the left, the so-called young Hegelians.

All the representatives of these diverse tendencies were attached to Hegel's theories. All were persuaded that in his system Hegel had brought philosophy to a high point and to an end. Heinrich Heine, the great German poet, a student of Hegel and a friend of Marx, spoke for all the Hegelians in claiming that "Our philosophical revolution is concluded; Hegel has closed the great circle."⁸³ Yet, as could be expected, the representatives of the different Hegelian tendencies drew widely differing conclusions from Hegel's system.

The shattering of the Hegelian school was precipitated by a theological conflict. David F. Strauss, the author of an influential work, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, published in 1835–6, inferred from his reading of Hegel that the incarnation did not take place in a single person but in the entire human race. In the controversy surrounding the appearance of his book, Strauss designated its participants as members of the center, right, and left wings of the Hegelian school.

The old Hegelians, who were philosophical centrists, attempted, not without difficulty, to defend the system as Hegel left it. Yet they were caught short by events which prevented them from realizing their intention, including the controversy loosed by Strauss. The right and the left Hegelians were separated by their relation to Hegel as well as by further academic, political, and religious factors. Then, as now, religion was associated with political power and resistance to change. The right-wing Hegelians, who emphasized the religious element in Hegel's thought, all had positions in the university. With the exception of Eduard Gans, a professor of law, the left-wing Hegelians, who deemphasized the religious element in Hegel's thought, were all located outside the university. The right-wing Hegelians tended to stress the religious element in Hegel's thought, which the left wing Hegelians tended to eliminate.⁸⁴

Religion and politics have long been related. Although the shattering of the Hegelian school occurred for theological reasons, the differences between the right and left Hegelians were often political. In simplifying, we can situate the rupture between these two tendencies in the interpretation of Hegel's brilliant aphorism, in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*: "What is actual is rational, and what is rational is actual."⁸⁵ Right-wing Hegelians even today often tend to accept the situation that obtains, which is regarded as rational, whereas left-wing Hegelians, such as Marx, underline in general the imperfections of the real world that is not quite rational enough and must be rendered still more rational. Those on the right content themselves with the real world as it is and frequently worship the past; those on the left refuse the world as it is in favor of a better, future world, denying the preeminence of the past. The former find the situation already reasonable, good – even the best of all possible worlds; the latter, who regard the situation as unreasonable, desire to transform it.

The contribution of the left-wing Hegelians, often designated, in opposition to the right-wing Hegelians, as the young Hegelians, consisted in spreading democratic ideas and in awakening the intellectual consciousness of Germany. Prior to Marx, who was also a young Hegelian, they were, however, unsuccessful in transforming their philosophical ideas into a political

movement. Among the young Hegelians, besides Strauss, the Bauer brothers Bruno and Edgar, Ludwig Feuerbach, who strongly influenced Marx, Arnold Ruge, with whom he collaborated, Moses Hess, and August von Cieszkowski should be mentioned. Ruge (1802–80), who edited the *Hallische Jahrbücher* from 1838 to 1841, helped to consolidate Hegelianism as a political movement. Cieszkowski (1814–94), a Polish count, studied in Berlin with Michelet. He refused the “standard” interpretation of Hegel’s idea that philosophy concerns only the past in favor of a view of philosophy turned resolutely toward the future. In stripping away the contemplative dimension of philosophy, he helped to transform it into a form of action. This tendency was further reinforced by Hess (1812–75) who, following Hegel,⁸⁶ foresaw a social revolution resulting from the growing contradiction between wealth and poverty.

A third reason is that although Marx was deeply immersed in Hegel’s writings, this relation, which is at least mentioned by everyone who discusses Marx, is rarely studied in detail.⁸⁷ Marx, who intended to address the relation, never did so. In a letter to Engels when he was at work on the project that culminated in *Capital*, he suggested he would eventually like to write a short book on what remained of Hegel’s method; but the book was never written.⁸⁸ Engels, who did study Marx’s relation to Hegel, did so badly. His short account of the relation of his and Marx’s theories to Hegelianism in his study of Feuerbach⁸⁹ is philosophically too weak to be more than an indication of what he thought the relation to be.⁹⁰

Finally, no one denies that Marx’s thought shows the influence of Hegel’s in many different ways and on many different levels, including explicit discussion of Hegel’s writings, further development of such Hegelian themes as alienation and objectification, utilization of Hegelian categories like the distinction between appearance and reality or essence, the adaptation of the ideas of negation and contradiction to history, and so on. From beginning to end his writings reflect an interest in Hegel as well as Hegel’s influence on his own thought.

Marx’s interest in Hegel began very early, before he began to write, and remained a constant throughout his writings. It is a main theme in the famous letter to his father, written in 1837, after two years of study at the university. Here Marx, still a teenager, insists on the unavoidable importance of philosophy, reports that he has already read Hegel from end to end, mentions the need to escape from the conceptual folds of Hegel’s theory, a task which would occupy him over the remainder of his life, and reports that he has already tried to work out a philosophy of right, or law, the very topic of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*.⁹¹

Marx began to write for publication in the early 1840s. His initial writings include two texts directly devoted to criticizing Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. He continued to address aspects of Hegel's philosophy both directly and indirectly in later writings all the way through *Capital*. The *Paris Manuscripts* contain extensive commentary on Hegel's *Phenomenology*. The *Grundrisse* provides important remarks on method, where Marx adopts a modified Hegelian approach. It is well known that *Capital* reflects the influence of the categorial framework developed in Hegel's *Logic*.

Marx and Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

In the famous preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx notes that the first task he undertook was a critical reexamination of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*.⁹² Hence it will be useful to say something about that book. I believe that Marx's theories, including his theory of modern industrial society, should be regarded as his own considered reaction to Hegel's theory of the political formation brought into existence by the industrial revolution, which led to modern capitalism. It will be appropriate, as a way into Marx's theories, to summarize some main aspects of Hegel's treatise. This will allow me to show that Marx's own theory of capitalism arises on the basis of his extension of certain Hegelian themes in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Hegel is the author of only four books: the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), the *Science of Logic* (1812, 1816), the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817, 1827, 1831), and the *Philosophy of Right* (1821). The *Phenomenology*, which is Hegel's first and perhaps greatest book, and which presents both the introduction and the first part of the system, contains what he calls the science of the experience of consciousness. The *Logic*, like the *Phenomenology*, is a very dark work. It is concerned, not with the old Aristotelian logic which so impressed Kant that he considered it a closed topic, nor with the new mathematical logic which arose in the late nineteenth century in the writings of the German philosopher Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) and his colleagues. Rather, it is concerned with what Hegel calls the conscious concept for which there is no distinction between concept and content. The *Encyclopedia*, which is often regarded as the “official” source of the famous system of philosophy, is no more than a collection of different assertions which taken together provide indications of the shape of the system but not the system itself. The *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel's last book, was, like the *Encyclopedia*, written as a handbook for Hegel's students in a series of numbered paragraphs, and appeared during Hegel's Berlin period, from 1818 until his

sudden death in 1831, when he was at the peak of his fame as the single most important living philosopher in Germany and in the world.

The *Philosophy of Right*, his final work, is the further development of the discussion begun in his earlier writings on objective spirit. This is the domain in which spirit becomes “concrete” within the relations of law, morality, ethical life, and on the levels of the family, civil society, and the state. In the *Encyclopedia* Hegel accords several pages to this theme that receives a more detailed analysis in the *Philosophy of Right*. The discussion of right, of morality, of ethical life, as well as of the family, is found, to begin with, in the *Phenomenology*, before being taken up again in less historical but more systematic fashion in the *Encyclopedia*.

Hegel’s fourth great work is composed of 360 numbered paragraphs, often accompanied by oral comments, whose authenticity is sometimes doubtful. The book includes a preface, an introduction, and three parts concerning “Abstract Right,” “Morality,” and “Ethical Life.” The two latter parts again take up themes addressed earlier in the *Phenomenology* where Hegel criticizes Kant’s abstract view of morality and expounds his own rival view of ethics. This theme concerns the three levels of the family, civil society, and the state.

The approach followed in the *Philosophy of Right* is described in a passage in the *Encyclopedia* as a progression from the abstract to the concrete. It proceeds from the concept of the will, hence from a conception of the human being as active within a social context, through its realization on the level of formal right, to morality and ethical life, its most concrete form, which brings together formal right and morality. Then the discussion begins again on the level of the family, the most natural and least developed of the manifest forms of right, to take up its exteriorization, or concrete manifestation, on the further levels of civil society and, finally, on the level of the state.

The word “right” (German, *Recht*), which Hegel employs in a legal sense, has several meanings. Normally, it is taken to mean “the totality of rules governing the relations between members of the same society.” In his treatise, Hegel understands the term “right” in a manner intrinsic to his theory. In an addition, or oral commentary, he distinguishes his concept of right (Latin, *ius*) from civil right, regarded as formal. In his own sense of the term, “right” takes on a broader meaning including civil right, that aspect of the concept most closely linked to legal considerations, as well as morality, ethical life, and even world history.

In most general terms, the Hegelian concept of right concerns free will and its realization, which requires a transition to practice. Hegel, who follows Aristotle’s view that all action aims at the good, holds it is not sufficient

to think the good within consciousness. It must also be realized through the transition from subjective desire to external existence so that the good does not only take shape within our mind but also and above all in our lives. Like Aristotle before him and Marx after him, Hegel is concerned that and how our ideas are realized in our lives. For Hegel, if philosophy is the exploration of the rational, then the various levels of the social context, which culminates in the state, provide the practical locus for the realization of the rational element in history.

In depicting the state as rational, Hegel suggests that every state represents a stage in the realization of reason, or the rose in the cross of the present. But no particular state fully realizes reason. The frequent objection that the mature Hegel simply identifies with the Prussian state of his time as the culmination of the historical quest reflects a serious misunderstanding of his view. The problem of the *Philosophy of Right*, as Hegel points out as early as the first page, is not only the idea of right but its realization,⁹³ which he also expresses in the development of the idea, or rational element of any object of study in what he calls “the immanent development of the thing itself.”⁹⁴ In other words, Hegel is interested here in the extent to which, through a system of right, through the existence of the modern state, the realm of freedom of which Kant dreamed in his idea of the kingdom of ends has in fact been realized, or in Hegelian language the degree to which “the world of mind [has been] brought forth out of itself like a second nature.”⁹⁵

The moments of Hegel’s treatise are keyed to the logical moments of the development of the absolutely free will as immediate in the form of abstract or formal right, then as subjective individuality featuring the idea of morality which stands over and opposes the community, and finally in ethical life where the social good is not only apprehended but also realized on the three levels of the family, civil society, and the state.⁹⁶ It is central to Hegel’s vision that social good cannot be realized through abstract morality and can only be realized in concrete fashion in the diverse institutions characterizing the modern state.

Philosophical Economics, the Industrial Revolution, and Adam Smith

Hegel is certainly not the first philosopher to scrutinize the economic foundations of society. In philosophy, interest in this topic goes all the way back to Greek antiquity. Well before Marx, Plato already treats economic questions as moral questions affecting the social life of individuals.⁹⁷ In the

Republic he indicates that the guardians will have neither silver, gold, nor private property;⁹⁸ and he insists on specialization as key to justice in the state, which he justifies on economic grounds.⁹⁹ In the *Laws*, a dialogue left unpublished at his death, he alters his earlier economic views in taking the position that virtue is incompatible with great wealth.¹⁰⁰ Although he still insists on strict specialization, or division of labor, he also insists on the potentiality for money to corrupt in restricting the economic activity and interests of citizens.

In comparison with Plato, Aristotle's treatment of economics is more sparing. He briefly discusses money in the context of economic reciprocity in the *Nicomachean Ethics*¹⁰¹ and money-making at more length in the *Politics*¹⁰² in noting that money provides equality through commensurability. He points out the differences between money-making, or property-getting, both natural and unnatural, which concerns making money, and household management, which does not. *Economics*, whose authenticity is questioned, examines the role of economic science in founding and maintaining a household. It is then no accident that Marx, who knew his Greek predecessors well, returns to Aristotle often in *Capital*.

In between the philosophers of Greek antiquity and Hegel fall the beginnings of the industrial revolution and of modern economics, or modern political economy, in the writings of Adam Smith and other members of the Scottish school.¹⁰³ The industrial revolution, which began in England after 1750 and later spread to the entire industrialized world, resulted in deep and permanent changes in modern life. The rapid expansion of industrial manufacture, which occurred in both agriculture and industry, brought together modern science and money to satisfy increasing demands for such conveniences as cotton cloth from India, earthenware dishes, iron pots and pans, and so on. This expansion depended on the development of different industries through a series of inventions and increased demand which affected the textile and iron industries, and (as a consequence of the invention of the steam engine)¹⁰⁴ an increased demand for coal for use in the newly invented smelting furnaces and steam engines. The textile industries typically flourished through the invention of various spinning machines (James Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny between 1764 and 1767; Richard Arkwright invented the water frame in 1769; Samuel Compton invented the mule in 1778), weaving machines (Edmund Cartwright invented the power loom in 1785), and the cotton gin in the United States (by Eli Whitney in 1793). The iron industry passed through a series of phases leading from smelting ore with coke rather than charcoal (by Abraham Darby in 1709), through the invention of the puddling furnace to change pig iron into wrought iron (by

Henry Cort in 1784), and the discovery of how to make steel from iron in the Bessemer converter (by Sir Henry Bessemer in 1858). The steam engine, which was invented by Thomas Newcomen in 1712 – Marx incorrectly locates it at the end of the seventeenth century¹⁰⁵ – was greatly improved by James Watt in 1769. Yet although the changes in industry greatly enriched some people, increasing their standards of comfort, such standards were greatly lowered for others, especially factory workers, who were impoverished by the appearance of large-scale business depressions (especially between 1789 and 1821, 1828 and 1832, 1837 and 1842, and in 1848).

Modern capitalism as we know it is the product of the industrial revolution which, since its inception in England after 1750, has never ceased to extend itself throughout the world. If John Locke (1632–1704) is the great philosopher of modern capitalism, Adam Smith (1723–90) is its great economist. We owe to Locke the explicit justification of private property, that is, the private ownership of the means of production, the central institution of modern capitalism.¹⁰⁶ According to Locke, private property is justified since one has an absolute right¹⁰⁷ to whatever one mixes one's labor with.¹⁰⁸ We owe to Smith the justification of the idea, as alive today as in his own time, that the mere functioning of modern society is sufficient to bring about a better world for all of us, in fact the best world that is possible in practice.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), the first great English political philosopher and author of *Leviathan* (1650), argues that the difference in individual interest generates a war of all against all (*bellum omnes contra omnes*) which, in a famous turn of phrase, he describes as “nasty, brutish and short.”¹⁰⁹ Hobbes's point, which later became the basis of Smith's view of political economy, is that each person pursues only his own private interest. In making the same assumption about the divergence of individual interests, Smith drew a far more optimistic conclusion than Hobbes on the grounds that, if each person works for his own private goals, society as a whole, hence everyone in it, in a word each of us, benefits. In disagreeing with Hobbes, Smith maintains that each pursues only his private interest while unwittingly serving, without either willing or knowing it, the interests of all, the public interest. Hegel, who was more realistic, later held that individuals pursue their own interest while omitting any claim that to do so is useful for everyone.¹¹⁰

The argument leading to Smith's conclusion is set out in his great work, *The Wealth of Nations*. When Smith, the Scottish moral philosopher and friend of David Hume, published his epoch-making book in 1776, the industrial revolution was already beginning to take hold. In this book, Smith offers a coherent account giving order and meaning to the newly emerging world of commerce and industry issuing from the industrial revolution, thus

providing the foundations of modern economic thought, which have remained unaltered ever since.

It is widely believed that Smith explains modern economic thought in terms of only three main principles.¹¹¹ To begin with, the main psychological drive in individuals is self-interest. This is a principle largely verified in practice. Next, there is a natural order in the universe which makes various expressions of self-interest add up to the social good. This principle, which is held on faith, has not and apparently cannot be verified in practice. But it is obviously “comforting” to those who receive an unequal share of economic wealth. Finally, it follows that the best program is to leave the economic process alone, a conclusion expressed through such closely synonymous terms as economic laissez-faire, economic liberalism, or economic non-interventionism. When it has been applied, the result is an unregulated and individualistic form of capitalism, what the English historian Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) strikingly called “government plus a constable.”

Smith’s economic analysis coincides with the optimism typical of the Scottish Enlightenment, a period to which he belonged chronologically and intellectually. This period included such important philosophers as the moral philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), the great empiricist David Hume (1711–76), and the moralist Adam Ferguson (1723–1816).¹¹² Unlike, say, Hobbes, the main philosophical figures of this period were united in expressing an overall confidence in the future of humanity.¹¹³ In this respect, Smith mainly differs in his optimistic reading of the specifically economic prospects for human beings toward the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The obvious difficulty in Smith’s approach lies in justifying the claim that the unbridled functioning of modern capitalism is good for all concerned. Early in the book, Smith addresses this concern by developing ideas found in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) and Bernard Mandeville (1630–1733). Leibniz, the great German philosopher, suggested in the *Monadology* (1714) through the principle of sufficient reason that nothing occurs gratuitously.¹¹⁴ When applied to theology, this leads to the idea that this is the best of all possible worlds. In *The Fable of the Bees; Or Private Vices, Public Virtues* (1705, 6th edition 1729), the English philosopher Mandeville argued that, as the title suggests, virtue, or altruism, is socially harmful, while vice, or actions taken only with oneself in view, are socially beneficial.

Possibly following Mandeville, Smith in turn contends that the effort of each individual is sufficient to ameliorate his own condition.¹¹⁵ The justification of this claim lies in the famous conception of the invisible hand through which, in working for oneself, each person unintentionally promotes the public good. In a justly famous passage, Smith writes:

As every individual, therefore, endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of domestic industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value; every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenue of society as great as he can. He generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end that was not part of it.¹¹⁶

Yet more realistically than many of his followers, Smith was aware that industrial capitalism does not benefit everyone equally, nor even everyone; that it is just that those who produce profit, including the poor, should themselves profit to the extent of adequate food, clothing, and shelter.¹¹⁷

Hegel and Economics

Although not the first philosopher to study economics, Hegel is the first to do so in post-Kantian idealism, to which chronologically and intellectually he belonged. Kant, who, to the best of my knowledge, never discusses political economy, stresses the moral dimension of modern social life. Schelling, who was interested in science, also shows no interest in economics. Fichte was at least interested in the economic sphere, although apparently unaware of modern political economy. He formulated a theory of the *Closed Commercial State* (1800), regarded as an autonomous political and economic entity. Hegel was not only knowledgeable about current events, but about the current state of economic theory as well. Throughout his career he was interested in anything and everything concerning real social conditions and political life. Already from 1800 to 1802 he was at work on an article, which only appeared posthumously, on "The German Constitution."¹¹⁸ In 1817, shortly before removing to Berlin, he published a major review, with an awkward title, concerning "Evaluation of the Printed Negotiations about the Parliament of the Royal States of Württemberg in the Years 1815–1816."¹¹⁹ He was particularly interested in events in England. Even before arriving in Jena in 1799, when he was still in Frankfurt, he kept up on the debates in the English parliament. He studied Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and he wrote a commentary, which has been lost, on a book by Sir James Steuart, *An Inquiry Into the Principles of Political Economy*.¹²⁰ In writing on Steuart, he followed the lead of

his younger colleague J. G. Hamann (1730–88), a German philosopher friendly with Kant.¹²¹ Although the name has now disappeared into history, Steuart was thought at the time to be important enough for Marx, who refers to him often, later to write that he was the first British economist to provide a correct system of modern, or bourgeois, political economy.¹²²

Hegel's deep knowledge of political economy is central to his philosophical theories.¹²³ His study of the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment enabled him to surpass Greek economic thought, particularly in his concept of civil society (*die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*).¹²⁴ This theme, which runs throughout his writings, appears very early, for instance in a fragment on folk religion from the early 1790s,¹²⁵ and then with increasing frequency when, during the Jena period (1799–1807), he begins to study political economy.

For Hegel, civil society lies between the family and the state. Writing at the time of the Greek city state (*polis*), Aristotle naturally runs together political economy and the household. Later, after the industrial revolution, Hegel equally naturally distinguishes more clearly than before between civil society and the state. He regards civil society as both a moment of the state and a kind of state in which economic activity directed toward the satisfaction of human needs is regulated through the administration of justice to protect private property as well as what he calls the police and the corporation. The adjective *bürgerlich*, from *Bürger*, refers both to someone who dwells in town, as opposed to a citizen, or *Staatsbürger*, as well as someone who, as in the French term “bourgeois,” belongs neither to the noble class nor the proletarian class. Civil society is a society, or *Gesellschaft*, since it functions outside the family and within the state according to rules of its own.

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel takes up the anatomy of civil society in the famous passage on “The System of Needs.” In his account of the system of needs, Hegel provides a rapid analysis of the economic foundations of modern liberal society in terms of its capacity as a functioning social system to respond to real human needs. The account of the “System of Needs” occurs as the first of three moments of civil society, the mediation between the family and the state. Civil society also includes discussions of the protection of property, regarded as the actuality of the principle of freedom, through the system of justice, and the provision against contingencies and care for particular interests through the police and the corporation, or corporate structures.

In the *Phenomenology* Hegel formulates a view of the human individual as self-realizing in and through objects which manifest the subjective will in objective form. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel develops this idea in his statement of the conceptual foundations of the modern liberal state. Early in the

book, in a discussion of the "Use of the Thing," he notes that in appropriating a thing it becomes mine and acquires a positive relation to me to fulfill my needs.¹²⁶ In his analysis of "The System of Needs" Hegel immediately notes that the individual person reaches objectivity, or satisfaction, through things which belong to and result from work. "Particularity," he points out, "attains its objectivity, i.e. its satisfaction, by means of (a) external things, which at this stage are likewise the property and produce of the needs and wills of others, and (b) work and effort, the middle term between the subjective and the objective."¹²⁷

Hegel understands political economy as a specifically modern science concerned with satisfaction through things and work. His view is rather unlike the normative view of economics, which currently prevails, according to which an economist is limited to merely charting, but also on occasion intervening in, the dynamic functioning of the modern economy.¹²⁸ For Hegel, who like Aristotle before and Marx after him, sees an indissoluble link between economics and ethics, political economy concerns the fulfillment of human needs. Hegel, who is a political realist, is under no illusions about the effect of modern society on individuals. Although he has little tolerance for the modern failure to remedy endemic poverty and other similar difficulties, he is not mainly concerned with providing an accurate formulation of the foundations of political economy.

After this initial statement, Hegel immediately breaks his discussion into three parts in order to consider basic, or subsistence, needs (*Bedürfnis*) and their corresponding satisfaction (*Befriedigung*) in modern bourgeois society starting with the industrial revolution, the kind of work appropriate to this task, and capital (*Vermögen*). He then further considers three class divisions with respect to economic capacity, before suggesting an analysis of the concept of satisfaction.

According to Hegel, the satisfaction of human needs affects not only the isolated individual, but all members of society,¹²⁹ which generally turns on needs and the means to satisfy them.¹³⁰ Needs are both natural and non-natural, as in the mental need for liberation (*Befreiung*), although the so-called state of nature cannot be recovered other than through work.¹³¹ Distantly following Locke, for whom labor creates value,¹³² and anticipating Marx's labor theory of value, Hegel distinguishes between work, which confers value to objects, and use-value.¹³³ Division of labor merely increases the dependency of individuals on each other,¹³⁴ as a result of which individual satisfaction is linked to satisfaction for others.¹³⁵

Hegel distinguishes between property (*Eigentum*) and financial capacity, or capital (*Vermögen*).¹³⁶ He contends that the latter presents work

opportunities to each while tending thereby to increase.¹³⁷ Capital divides society into three main classes: the agricultural, the business, and the civil servant.¹³⁸ He regards class membership as depending on natural capacity, birth, and other factors. He acknowledges the destabilizing result of a failure to integrate individuals into the structure of society.¹³⁹ He draws the conclusions of his analysis in insisting that a person is actualized only in and through a relation to a particular sphere of need, that is within the practical realm.¹⁴⁰

Hegel on Property

Since I believe that Marx's position turns on the difference between his and Hegel's views of property, it will be useful to summarize the latter's view in this respect. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel studies the development of the idea of the absolutely free will on three levels: as immediate, or abstract, embodied in an external thing; then as reflected into itself, or inward; then finally as the unity of these two abstract moments in which the idea is not only understood but also realized within ethical life on the levels of the family, civil society, and the state. Property is studied on the level of abstract right in which the absolutely free will is abstract and immediate (§§ 41–72). Hegel takes a generally legal or juridical approach to property focused on possession or property ownership. As concerns property, people relate to each other through contracts. In the first subsection, Hegel studies property in detail before studying contracts and crimes against property. The discussion of property contains a general account, which is followed by three parts: taking possession (of a thing), use of the thing, and alienation of property.

Individual freedom takes so-called external form as a thing, in which one enjoys the right to embody one's will. Possession is having power over a thing. Property is not only the satisfaction of needs but above all the "embodiment of freedom."¹⁴¹ In this sense, property is private property.¹⁴² Since the individual will is realized through property, property becomes private property. The amount of property that an individual possesses to meet his needs is indifferent with respect to rights.

Taking possession of an object also takes three forms, according as one physically appropriates it, makes it, or marks it as one's own. The first is immediate but temporary. The second is the way in which a person imposes a form on something which endures as an external object. This form of possession is presupposed in the production of commodities typical of modern industrial society and, as will emerge below, in Marx's theory of alienation. In a comment on slavery, Hegel says that man is not a natural entity capable of

being enslaved, since we are not naturally free. We only become free as the consequence of the consciousness of freedom which leads to the fight for recognition in the relationship between master and slave.¹⁴³

Under the heading of the use of the thing, Hegel points out that the individual will is realized in and through the thing which is changed, destroyed, or consumed. Full, unrestricted usage presupposes the relation of ownership, as distinguished from partial or temporary use of a thing. Value is the universal property of the thing, or the use to which it can be put. Marx develops this idea in his concept of use value.

In the discussion of alienation (*Entäusserung*) of property Hegel develops a view which anticipates Marx's. Hegel, who understands alienation as the cession of one's property, begins by pointing out that one can only alienate that property, or object, which has been invested with one's will. By the same token, one's personality or self-consciousness is inalienable, since it is not an object. Only those things or products of human beings can be alienated, either in giving someone else the use of my capacities, or my time, the result of which is to introduce a separation between myself and what I do. In an important statement, Hegel writes: "By alienating the whole of my time, as crystallized in my work, and everything I produced, I would be making into another's property the substance of my being, my universal activity and actuality, my personality."¹⁴⁴ Although Hegel did not go on to develop a theory of alienation specific to modern industrial society, he clearly provides the conceptual basis for doing so. Marx develops the Hegelian idea that one "crystallizes" oneself in one's work, in capitalism in the production of commodities, as the basis of his view of alienation in modern industrial society.

Marx and Hegel: Some Tentative Conclusions

The discussion has reached a point where it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions. Hegel obviously has a sophisticated theory of modern society, including its contribution to the realization of natural and unnatural or social human needs. His theory is based on a conception of human beings who, in meeting their needs through their activity, produce a web of relations between themselves, things, and others. To an often unsuspected degree, certainly unsuspected if one thinks that philosophers in general, particularly Hegel, are uninterested in concrete social phenomena,¹⁴⁵ Hegel's focus in the "System of Needs" lies squarely on the way and the extent to which modern liberal capitalism is able to satisfy human needs. As will emerge below, this will be Marx's project as well.

This leads to three tentative conclusions which can only be asserted but not demonstrated at this point:

- 1 To begin with, any study of Marx which fails to take into account or regards his relation to Hegel as merely or even mainly negative simply misunderstands its proximate origins in the German philosophical tradition. Marx's position is continuous with and builds upon, rather than merely rejecting, philosophy, as will emerge in some detail below.
- 2 We can measure Marx's theories in terms of Hegel's, although any effort to do that must await a sketch of Marx's position. If, as I contend, Marx is centrally concerned with very nearly the same set of issues as Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right*, particularly in the famous passage on the "System of Needs," then Marx's own specific contribution can be grasped through the way he differs from, modifies, or surpasses Hegel.¹⁴⁶
- 3 Marx is not, as Marxists, even Lukács, the most informed among them, so often urge, at heart an anti-Hegelian, but rather basically a Hegelian. Indeed, he is certainly the greatest of Hegel's students and, since Hegel is a German idealist philosopher, in a sense to be specified, even a German idealist. In that specific sense, the persistent Marxist effort to counterpose materialism to idealism, or Marx to Hegel, is a basic error. But the arguments needed to establish these points will only be given later in the book when the main elements in Marx's theories are in place.

Notes

- 1 See Michel Henry, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983, p. 1.
- 2 See Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 86–7. For critique, see Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, London: Macmillan, 1982. See also E. O. Wright, "Giddens's Critique of Marxism," *New Left Review*, no. 138, March–April 1983, pp. 11–35.
- 3 See *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, ed. Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek, and Jean-Louis Margolin, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- 4 V. I. Lenin, *The Teachings of Karl Marx*, New York: International Publishers, 1930, p. 10.
- 5 Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, New York: International Publishers, 1939, pp. 10, 11.
- 6 See, for example, Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality: A Study of the*

- Sources of Poetry*, London: Macmillan, 1937.
- 7 See, for example, Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, London: Verso, 1985.
 - 8 See, for example, Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973.
 - 9 See, for example, Fritz Pappenheim, *The Alienation of Modern Man*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1959.
 - 10 See, for example, E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Vintage, 1963.
 - 11 See, for example, Anatoly Rakitov, *Historical Knowledge*, trans. H. Campbell Creighton, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982.
 - 12 See, for example, Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957.
 - 13 See, for example, Milan Machovec, *A Marxist Looks At Jesus*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.
 - 14 See, for example, Steven Lukes, *Marxism and Morality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
 - 15 See, for example, V. A. Lektorsky, *Subject, Object, Cognition*, trans. Sergei Surovatkin, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980.
 - 16 See, for example, Lucien Sève, *Man in Marxist Theory and the Psychology of Personality*, trans. John McGreal, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978.
 - 17 See, for example, Lucien Sebag, *Marxisme et structuralisme*, Paris: Payot, 1964.
 - 18 For a statement of the Marxist world view by a leading representative of Soviet Marxism, see T. I. Oizerman, *Nauchno-filosofskoe Mirovozzrenie Marksizma*, Moscow: Nauka, 1989.
 - 19 Ibid.
 - 20 See Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971.
 - 21 There are still only two histories of Marxism. See Predrag Vranicki, *Geschichte des Marxismus*, trans. Stanislava Rummel and Vjekoslava Wiedmann, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972; see also Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 3 vols., trans. P. S. Falla, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
 - 22 See George V. Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, New York: International Publishers, 1969, p. 21.
 - 23 According to MacIntyre, Marxism is in this respect comparable to Christianity. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988.
 - 24 See G. D. H. Cole, *The Development of Socialism During the Past Fifty Years*, London: University of London Press, 1952.
 - 25 See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 45 vols., Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960–3, vol. 31, pp. 197–8.
 - 26 See Roy A. Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*, trans. Colleen Taylor, ed. David Joravsky and Georges Haupt, New York: Vintage, 1973.

- 27 Kolakowski, who carefully analyzes philosophical differences between Marx and Engels, fails to see their importance in conflating Marx and Marxism. See Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 1, ch. 16, pp. 399–420.
- 28 This has to be qualified, since there are passages where Marx characterizes his work as extra-philosophical in virtue of its empirical nature, hence suggesting an opposition between the empirical and the philosophical.
- 29 See Tom Rockmore, *Irrationalism: Lukács and the Marxist View of Reason*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992.
- 30 See Joseph Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, New York: International Publishers, 1940.
- 31 See *Osnovy Marksistskoi Filosofii Uchebnik*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1963.
- 32 Ibid, p. 4.
- 33 See, for example, Bas van Fraassen, *The Scientific Image*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.
- 34 See ch. 2, "Idealism and Materialism," in Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, ed. C. P. Dutt, New York: International Publishers, 1941, pp. 20–32.
- 35 See Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Francis Fulton, Indianapolis, IN: LLA, 1960.
- 36 See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus-Logico Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961.
- 37 For a sophisticated defense of the reflection theory of knowledge, see Sean Sayers, *Reality and Reason: Dialectic and the Theory of Knowledge*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1985.
- 38 For a careful study, centered on the Soviet view, see Gustav Wetter, *Dialectical Materialism: A Historical and Systematic Survey of Philosophy in the Soviet Union*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.
- 39 This creates an embarrassment if, as Stalin suggests, Marxism is the conjunction of two doctrines which are never named by the supposed founding fathers of the world view. There have been frequent efforts to read these doctrines back into the canonical texts. Disregarding the fact that Engels's *Feuerbach* was serialized in 1886 and initially appeared as a book in 1888, hence before either term was used, the editor of the MEW suggests that this volume "gibt eine systematische Darstellung der dialektischen und historischen Materialismus:" *Marx-Engels-Werke* 21, Berlin: Dietz, 1962, n. 22, p. 579. Continuing this fiction, the editor of the English translation entitled chapter 4 of Engels's *Feuerbach* "Dialectical Materialism," although there are no chapter titles in German. See Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 42. This excess of political zeal is silently corrected in the recent edition of the collected works of Marx and Engels published by the same editor. See Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 26, p. 381.
- 40 See George L. Kline, "The Myth of Marx's Materialism," in *Philosophical Sovietology: The Pursuit of a Science*, ed. Helmut Dahm, Thomas J. Blakeley, and George L. Kline, Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1988, p. 182, n. 44.
- 41 Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, p. 5.

- 42 Guest, *Dialectical Materialism*, p. 23.
- 43 See *ibid.*, p. 103.
- 44 See *Osnovy Marksistskoi Filosofii Uchebnik*, p. 647.
- 45 Eugen Karl Dühring (1833–1921), a German economist and socialist, taught at the University of Berlin from 1863 to 1877.
- 46 See Frederick Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* (= *Anti-Dühring*), trans. Emile Burns, New York: International Publishers, 1970, p. 13.
- 47 See *ibid.*, p. 155.
- 48 See Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, trans. and ed. C. P. Dutt, New York: International Publishers, 1940.
- 49 See Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 42, n. 1.
- 50 Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, p. 5.
- 51 See Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, p. 21 n.
- 52 See *Osnovy Marksistskoi Filosofii Uchebnik*, p. 647.
- 53 Frederick Engels, "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx," in *The Marx–Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, New York: Norton, 1972, p. 681.
- 54 Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 41.
- 55 See *ibid.*, p. 47.
- 56 See *ibid.*, p. 55.
- 57 See *ibid.*, p. 59.
- 58 See Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 32, 33, 292.
- 59 It was raised most recently in John McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- 60 Tucker, *Marx–Engels Reader*, p. 762.
- 61 Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 42 n.
- 62 See Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, p. 23.
- 63 See Bertram Wolfe, *Marxism: One Hundred Years in the Life of a Doctrine*, n. p.: Delta, 1967.
- 64 For an example of the Marxist tendency to retouch the texts to remove whatever contradicts the view about them, in this case to remove any traces of Hegelian idealism, see Dick Howard, "On Deforming Marx: The French Translation of *Grundrisse*," *Science and Society*, Autumn 1969, pp. 358–65.
- 65 See McLellan, preface to *Grundrisse*, p. 2.
- 66 See Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 2, pp. 63–76. See also Oskar Negt, ed., Nikolai Bucharin and Abram Deborin, *Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanistischen Materialismus*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974.
- 67 See Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 78 n.
- 68 For instance, *The Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. Loyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967, contains a short text by Engels. See *ibid.*, pp. 384–6.
- 69 See Bertram D. Wolfe, *An Ideology in Power: Reflections on the Russian Revolution*, New York: Stein and Day, 1970, p. 274. For a memoir relative to his accusation, see Roy A. Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*, New York: Vintage, 1973, pp. 132–9.

- 70 See *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1970, vol. 1, p. ix.
- 71 It is included in volume 42, which appeared only in 1983.
- 72 Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Ergänzungsband, Schriften. Manuskripte. Briefe bis 1844*, in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1968, p. v.
- 73 See Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 1: *The Founders*.
- 74 See Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, London: New Left Books, 1970.
- 75 Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, who believes that judges should avoid all reference to legislative history in interpreting statutes, represents so-called textualism. See Antonin Scalia, *A Matter of Interpretation: Federal Courts and the Law*, with commentary by Amy Gutman, Gordon S. Wood, Laurence H. Tribe, Mary Ann Glendon, and Ronald Dworkin, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998. The similarity between his view and Heidegger's philosophical view, which also rests on interpretation rooted in the identification of the original meaning of the words in which a text is framed, is striking.
- 76 Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 43.
- 77 See his review of Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, published in *Das Volk* (1895), reprinted in *Feuerbach*, p. 78.
- 78 Recently, the effort has begun to understand Lenin as a serious thinker whose ideas are philosophically important. See Kevin Anderson, *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995.
- 79 See the introduction to *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, ed. Tom Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964, pp. 1, 4. According to Bottomore and Rubel, Marx's writings betray a hitherto unsuspected influence of Saint-Simon.
- 80 See *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 20.
- 81 Cohen, the founder of analytic Marxism, provides an important discussion of Marx's theory of history which reflects little interest in or grasp of Hegel. In this way, he is typical of analytic Marxism. See G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- 82 See Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relation between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976.
- 83 Heinrich Heine, *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, trans. John Snodgrass, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986, p. 156.
- 84 For discussion of "The Hegelian Left," see Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, vol. 1, pp. 81–96.
- 85 *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 10.
- 86 In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel devotes §§ 241–6 (pp. 148–50) to poverty. In an oral addition to the written text, he remarks: "The important question of how poverty is to be abolished is one of the most disturbing problems which agitate modern society." *Philosophy of Right*, p. 278.
- 87 Among the many studies, see Lucio Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel*, London: New Left Books, 1973; Iring Fetscher, "The Relation of Marxism to Hegel,"

in *Karl Marx and Marxism*, London: New Left Books, 1970; Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966; Jean Hyppolite, *Studies on Marx and Hegel*, ed. and trans. John O'Neill, New York: Harper and Row, 1969; Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, London: New Left Books, 1970; Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1941; Oskar Negt, *Aktualität und Folgen der Philosophie Hegels*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970; Manfred Riedel, "Hegel und Marx," in *System und Geschichte*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974; and Oskar Cöster, *Hegel und Marx: Struktur und Modalität ihrer Begriffe politisch-sozialer Vernunft in terms einer "Wirklichkeit" der "Einheit" von "allgemeinem" und "besonderem Interesse,"* Bonn: Bouvier, 1983.

- 88 "If there should ever be time for such work again, I should greatly like to make accessible to the ordinary human intelligence . . . what is rational in the method which Hegel discovered but at the same time enveloped in mysticism." Marx to Engels, January 14, 1858, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 40, p. 248.
- 89 See Engels, *Feuerbach*.
- 90 For devastating criticism of Engels's reading of Kant's crucial conception of the thing in itself by a fellow Marxist, see Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 131–3.
- 91 See "Letter To His Father On A Turning-Point In His Life" (1837), in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, pp. 40–50.
- 92 See MEW 29, p. 262; CW 29, p. 261.
- 93 See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 1, p. 14.
- 94 Ibid, §2, p. 14.
- 95 Ibid, §4, p. 20.
- 96 Ibid, §33, pp. 35–6.
- 97 See Ernest Barker, *Greek Political Theory: Plato and His Predecessors*, London: Methuen, 1961, pp. 190–2.
- 98 See Plato, *Republic* 417A.
- 99 Ibid, 423D.
- 100 See Plato, *Laws* 742E–743A.
- 101 See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* V, 5.
- 102 See Aristotle, *Politics* I, 8–11.
- 103 Marx studies the Industrial Revolution in detail under the heading of "Machinery and modern industry" in *Capital* vol. 1, ch. 15.
- 104 Marx correctly claims that the steam engine did not cause the industrial revolution, whose machines required its amelioration. See *Capital* vol. 1, in CW 35, p. 375.
- 105 See *Capital* vol. 1, in MEW 23, p. 398; CW 35, p. 378.
- 106 Locke's view still has many defenders. A recent example is Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1984.
- 107 Locke's idea that the right to property is absolute contradicts the ancient Greek view that the right to property is merely a social creation, but nei-

- ther absolute nor inherent. See Barker, *Greek Political Theory*, p. 371.
- 108 "Whatsoever he . . . removes . . . he hath mixed his Labour with, and joyned it to something that is his own . . . thereby making it his Property." *The Second Treatise of Government*, in John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, intro. and notes by Peter Laslett, New York: New American Library, 1963, §27, p. 329. This can be read as the claim that when he makes something part of himself, he makes it his own or "properly" his, where "proper" is the root of "property." See also *ibid.*, §44, pp. 340–1; §28, p. 330; §27, p. 329; and §45, p. 341.
- 109 The full passage reads as follows: "And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short." Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C. B. Macpherson, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974, part I, ch. 13, p. 186.
- 110 See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §187, p. 124.
- 111 See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan, intro. Max Lerner, New York: Modern Library, 1937, p. viii.
- 112 See Adam Ferguson, *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 1767. This book, which was translated into German in 1768, probably influenced Hegel's discussion of bourgeois society (*die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*). According to Franz Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*, Munich and Berlin, 1920, vol. 2, p. 118, the popularity of this term was mainly due to the translation of Ferguson's book.
- 113 See Norbert Waszek, *Man's Social Nature: A Topic of the Scottish Enlightenment in its Historical Setting*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986.
- 114 For various statements of this principle, see *Monadology*, §§31, 32, 33, 36.
- 115 See Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, p. 508.
- 116 *Ibid.*, p. 423.
- 117 *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- 118 See "The German Constitution," in *Hegel's Political Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 143–242.
- 119 See Hegel, "Beurteilung der im Druck erschienenen Verhandlungen in der Versammlung der Landstände des Königsreichs Würtemberg im Jahr 1815 und 1816," in *Heidelbergerische Jahrbücher der Literatur* (1817).
- 120 According to Rosenkranz, Hegel worked on this commentary from February 19 until May 16, 1799. See Karl Rosenkranz, *G. W. F. Hegels Leben*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972, p. 86.
- 121 According to Hamann, in his profound discussion of political economy, Stuart surpassed others such as Ferguson. See *Briefwechsel*, ed. Ziesemer and Henkel, Wiesbaden 1956, vol. 2, p. 418, cited in Joachim Ritter, *Hegel and the French Revolution: Essays on the Philosophy of Right*, trans. R. D. Winfield, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982, p. 88, n. 33.
- 122 See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 29, p. 297.
- 123 See Lukács, *The Young Hegel*.
- 124 See Norbert Waszek, *The Scottish Enlightenment and Hegel's Account of 'Civil*

- Society*, 'Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988.
- 125 A typical early instance lies in his remark that Jesus's commandments form the first foundation for the legal code of civil society. See "Fragmente über Volksreligion und Christentum" (1793–5), in G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Rinus Michel, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971, vol. 1, p. 61.
- 126 See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §§59–64, pp. 49–52, esp. §59, p. 49.
- 127 Ibid, §189, p. 126.
- 128 This approach is dominant but not universal. For a more socially responsive approach, see, for example, Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- 129 See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §192, p. 127.
- 130 See *ibid*, §193, pp. 127–8.
- 131 See *ibid*, §194, p. 128.
- 132 See Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, in *Two Treatises of Government*, §50, pp. 343–4.
- 133 See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §196, pp. 128–9.
- 134 See *ibid*, §198, p. 129.
- 135 See *ibid*, §199, pp. 129–30.
- 136 See *ibid*, §170, p. 116.
- 137 See *ibid*, §199, pp. 129, 130.
- 138 See *ibid*, §202, p. 231.
- 139 See *ibid*, §206, pp. 132–3.
- 140 See *ibid*, §207, pp. 133–4.
- 141 Ibid, § 45, p. 42.
- 142 See *ibid*, § 46, p. 45.
- 143 See *ibid*, § 58, p. 48.
- 144 Ibid, § 67, p. 54.
- 145 According to Bottomore and Rubel, following the standard Marxist view, Hegel was uninterested in and not able to explain real social phenomena. See Karl Marx, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, p. 6. It is at least arguable that this was not Hegel's immediate intention.
- 146 Others have seen the interest of this approach. Avtonomova, for instance, suggests that Marx renders Hegel's still mystical position more concrete. See N. S. Avtonomova, *Rassudok, Razum, Ratsional'nost'*, Moscow: Nauka, pp. 87–90.

2

Marx's Early Writings

Like Hegel, Marx, who had a keen historical sense, consistently related ideas to their time and place. We should not do less in approaching Marx's own ideas. It is useful to make a few general comments about his life and thought, and then to fill in relevant details about his life to appreciate the main lines of his philosophically most important writings.

Marx's Life and Thought

Karl Marx was born in Trier in the Prussian Rhineland on May 5, 1818 as the third of nine children and died in London in voluntary exile on March 14, 1883.¹ His father, Heinrich Marx (1787–1838), was a lawyer. Both his father and his mother, Henriette (1787–1863), whose maiden name was Pressburg, were from religious Jewish families, with rabbis on both sides of the family extending back hundreds of years. For social reasons, Marx's father converted to Protestantism shortly after Marx was born. The children were all baptized in 1824, when Marx was six, and the mother in 1825.

Marx grew up in Trier, a small city in the Moselle region. He studied at the local high school (*Gymnasium*) from which he graduated in 1835. From there he went on to university, studying first in Bonn and then later in Berlin. In Berlin he spent time with a group of left-wing young intellectuals interested in Hegel who belonged to the Doctor's Club (*Doktorklub*). At the university, he took a doctorate in philosophy before turning to journalism, which, other than the charity of his friends, especially Friedrich Engels, was for a long time his only source of income.

In 1843 he began a series of periods of exile from his native land, going first to Paris, where he again met Engels, who quickly became his close friend and lifelong collaborator. After that he went briefly to Brussels, with much

brief stops in other places, before going on to London, where he lived for the rest of his life.

Marx, who was a man of prodigious intellectual energy, began to write soon after leaving the university and only stopped at his death. His writings, which were initially journalistic and then philosophical, rapidly took on an increasingly economic flavor. The outlines of his work were not well known for many years, since a number of his most important writings did not appear during his lifetime. Due to their tardy appearance, an accurate grasp of his literary corpus has only become possible relatively recently.

It has long been known that Marx wrote a series of philosophical texts on Hegel and Hegelianism. But it was thought that he later left philosophy behind in turning to economics, where his main contribution is usually held to lie. His writings on economic themes culminated in an increasingly more detailed critique of political economy. His masterpiece was long held to be the initial volume of *Capital*, the first of three planned volumes – Marx was unable to finish the others – which appeared in 1867. It was realized more recently that *Capital* is only a small part of an even larger project, whose main surviving fragment, an unfinished collection of manuscripts known as the *Grundrisse*, only became widely available in the early 1950s. Another text, which appeared in the 1930s and only later made its way into English, is variously known as the *Paris Manuscripts*, since it was written in Paris, or the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, since these are its twin themes, or again as the *Manuscripts of 1844*, the date when it was composed. When it appeared, its brilliant discussion of alienation, arguably equal to anything in the philosophical literature, called attention to a side of Marx which had been little discussed, forcing a revision in the interpretation of his theories and spawning heated discussion about so-called Marxian humanism.

Marx's Early Writings

It is often said that Marx's thought combines influences drawn from German philosophy, French socialism, and English political economy.² The early Marx was thoroughly trained as a philosopher before he became interested in political economy and socialism. Even those who believe that he later left philosophy behind think that the genesis of his position lies in a complex relation to Hegel's philosophy.

Marx's relation to Hegel resembles Hegel's relation to Kant. Kant's critical philosophy turns on the introduction of his so-called Copernican revolution in philosophy, so-called by analogy with Copernicus's astronomical

revolution. This amounts to a “constructivist” epistemological claim, central to Kant’s position, that we can know only what we in some undefined sense “construct,” “produce,” or “make.” With some important exceptions (Hamann and Herder; Salomon Maimon, 1754–1800), Kant’s philosophical contemporaries mainly thought he was correct, but had failed to elaborate his position in sufficient detail. Later German idealism (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) should be seen as concerned to continue, to deepen, and to complete Kant’s Copernican turn, if not according to its letter, at least according to its spirit.

Kant, who distinguished sharply between thought and history, believed it necessary to begin anew since, according to his criteria, philosophy worthy of the name had never existed before him. Others think that later intellectuals build on their predecessors. Newton claimed to have seen further than other men since he was able to stand on the shoulders of giants. Hegel similarly took a wider, more clement view than Kant of his predecessors. Hegel, who knew the preceding philosophical tradition unusually well, typically endeavors to build on what is still useful in prior theories. His effort to carry forward, to bring to completion, and in that sense to end, Kant’s Copernican turn culminates in a philosophical theory of the modern state as the context for the fulfillment of human needs.

As Hegel does for Kant, Marx takes up, criticizes, corrects, and carries further Hegel’s own view. In his writings, Marx debates Hegelian themes, applies Hegelian insights to specific issues, criticizes Hegel in the process of finding his own philosophical voice, and stresses one Hegelian strand over others in the wider position, all the while struggling to come to grips with the dominant philosophical influence of the period. There is no obvious way to isolate the critique of Hegel’s position from the genesis and formulation of Marx’s own position. This is perhaps most evident in Marx’s early writings, say prior to the *German Ideology*, at a time when Marx is finding his way, and when he has not yet begun the long critique of traditional political economy which will occupy him all the way through *Capital*. Yet Marx’s intellectual joust with Hegel does not end with his early texts. It continues virtually unabated in even the most economic of his later writings, including the *Grundrisse*, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, and indeed throughout *Capital*.

Three main themes, which occur throughout all his later writings, begin to emerge in Marx’s early texts: his criticism of Hegel, his criticism of (orthodox) political economy, and the formulation of his own position. These interrelated themes cannot be isolated from one another: the critical discussion of Hegel and (orthodox) political economy enables Marx to formulate his own

position; his interest in political economy helps him to criticize Hegel; and his interest in Hegel helps him to criticize (orthodox) political economy. These three themes run side by side in his early writings which, in this respect, differ only in the degree to which one or the other theme predominates.

Which are Marx's early writings? The answer depends on complex issues about the development, and continuity, of Marx's thought. There is room for disagreement about what should be included, or even discussed in detail. The MEW edition, for instance, initially omitted the crucially important *Paris Manuscripts* (1844), while including two early articles on Hegel, another on the Jewish question, and still another on the King of Prussia, all from the same year. The supplementary volume to this edition contains the *Paris Manuscripts*, notes for Marx's doctoral dissertation, the doctoral dissertation itself, as well as a text written by Marx in 1835 when he was 17. Bottomore, on the other hand, includes Marx's discussion of the Jewish question, an article on Hegel, and the *Paris Manuscripts* in his edition of Marx's early writings.³ Robert Tucker includes all this as well as the *German Ideology* and the "Theses on Feuerbach."⁴ Since I will be emphasizing the philosophical side of Marx's position, I will comment on those texts which most closely illustrate my understanding of Marx's reaction to and appropriation of philosophical themes, with special attention to his relation to Hegel.

Hegelianism in Marx's Dissertation

The young Hegelians famously thought that with Hegel philosophy had come to an end. Heidegger believes it is necessary to come to grips with, to appropriate, and to "overcome" Hegel, who cannot simply be left to one side, if philosophy is to survive.⁵ In the early 1840s, more than a century and a half ago, Marx also linked his project to the effort to come to grips with, to appropriate, and to "overcome" Hegel. Marxists typically deal expeditiously with Hegel in a well chosen phrase or two. This effort is a constant dimension in Marx's writings from beginning to end, as if for him the dialogue with Hegel were a never ending task.⁶

The concern with Hegel already visible in his letter to his father is a major theme in Marx's early writings. Marx enrolled at the University of Bonn to study law in the fall of 1835. After a year of desultory studies, during which he became engaged to his future wife, Jenny von Westphalen (1814–81), whose brother was a classmate of Marx in Trier, Marx transferred to the University of Berlin to continue studying law. In Berlin, he studied philosophy and history as well as jurisprudence. In becoming a member of the

Doktorklub, he came into contact with others with strong Hegelian leanings, including the Bauer brothers Edgar and Bruno, Carl Friedrich Köppen (1808–63), who later became a teacher and historian in Berlin, and Adolph Rutenberg. Bruno Bauer (1820–86) later taught Protestant theology at the Universities of Berlin and Bonn, but was dismissed because of his radical views. Edgar Bauer (1820–86), his brother, was active in the German revolution in 1848 before emigrating to England, returning to Prussia only after the political amnesty in 1861.

Marx's father died in May 1838, a scant year before Marx began to do research for his doctoral dissertation on Epicurus, someone Hegel scarcely mentions. The dissertation eventually included Democritus as well, whom Hegel discusses in some detail in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. During the summer of 1839, while he continued his research, Marx sat in on a course given by Bruno Bauer. Marx handed in his dissertation on April 6, 1841 and was awarded the doctorate of philosophy degree on April 15.

Marx's dissertation provides a thoroughly Hegelian treatment of the *Difference in the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* (*Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie*). The text, which is short – some 80 printed pages, but part of the manuscript has been lost – is dedicated to his future father-in-law. It is divided into two main parts, including a description of the different views of philosophy of nature in Democritus and Epicurus, then a more detailed account of the difference in their respective views of physics, followed by a critique of Plutarch's critique of Epicurean theology.

In the dissertation, a strong Hegelian influence is manifest in Marx's concern with such themes as difference, the philosophy of nature, and self-consciousness. Hegel's philosophy turns on the concept of difference (*Differenz*). In his opinion, the task of philosophy is to acknowledge but also to overcome difference through a unifying and unified conceptual framework. Hegel's position is initially formulated in a discussion of the difference between the philosophical theories of Fichte and Schelling, at the time the two most important post-Kantian idealists, whose positions are, in Hegel's eyes, forms of the one true philosophical system.⁷

Philosophy of nature, which was an important topic when Marx prepared his dissertation, has since given way to philosophy of science. Greek pre-Socratic philosophers studied the totality of things in a series of primitive cosmologies, such as Thales's view that all is water, Anaxagoras's view that reason is the ultimate explanatory principle, and so on. By the time of Kant, philosophical speculation about nature had come to be called philosophy of nature (*Naturphilosophie*). Kant, who denies that we can experience nature

as a whole, suggests that the understanding is the source of the laws of nature.⁸ He studied the philosophy of nature extensively in such texts as the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (1786).⁹ Kant's interest in nature is an important theme in later German idealism, with the prominent exception of Fichte. Philosophical speculation about nature is a main strand of Schelling's early work. In the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* Hegel made the philosophy of nature one of the three main parts of his official system of philosophy.¹⁰

For Hegel, the transition from consciousness, or awareness of otherness, for instance consciousness of an object, to self-consciousness, or awareness of self, what Hegel calls certainty of self, is a prerequisite for the development of reason. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* he relates the development of self-consciousness to the master-slave relation. He further links the rise of philosophical theories dependent on self-consciousness (such as stoicism, skepticism, and the unhappy consciousness, the latter a form of medieval Christianity) to prevailing social conditions.

In his dissertation, Marx studies post-Aristotelian philosophy which, for the young Hegelians, was analogous to their own situation when in Hegel's wake philosophy seemed to have reached a high point and, for some observers, the end. Unlike other post-Hegelian thinkers, such as Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, at this point Marx is concerned neither to subvert nor even to evade philosophy. He sees the Aristotelian moment in Greek philosophy as dividing into Epicurean, stoic, and skeptical philosophies on the one hand and Alexandrian speculation on the other. Marx follows Hegel in describing the former three philosophies as belonging to self-consciousness.

Although their theories are different, Epicurus and Democritus share the same philosophy of nature. Marx points to general agreement about the fact that Epicurus merely took over Democritus's physics.¹¹ Carefully examining the two views and the literature about them, like Hegel before him, and using Hegelian terminology, Marx argues that the two men differ on every important issue, in that Epicurus is a skeptic and Democritus is a dogmatist.¹² They share a commitment to atomism which they understand in different ways. Marx's suggestion that Epicurus carries atomism to its final conclusion in the form of abstract individuality¹³ agrees with Hegel's own view.¹⁴ Since Hegel has little to say about Democritean physics, Marx innovates in noting that for Democritus the commitment to atomism is the key to his empirical study of nature in general.¹⁵

Marx's dissertation is an informed, careful study by a gifted young philosopher, obviously influenced by Hegel, well informed about the topic, and able to read the sources in the original language. It is the work of a

promising young man. In other circumstances, it would have appeared as a book, normal in German academic circles, as Marx had planned, as a stepping stone to an expected academic career.

Feuerbach and Marx's Early Critique of Hegel

Although Marx did the research for his dissertation in Berlin, the completed dissertation was submitted in Jena in mid-April 1841, where he received the degree a week later. The reason seems to be that unlike Bonn and Berlin, in Jena a public defense of the dissertation was not necessary and the fees were less than in either Bonn or Berlin.

In the 1840s job prospects were not good for freshly minted philosophers, even the most talented among them. Although difficult and quarrelsome, the young Marx obviously impressed the people who knew him. At the time, Moses Hess, who later became an important propagandist for German socialism, and collaborated with both Marx and Engels, wrote a letter in which he described Marx, then 23 years old, as perhaps the greatest and only real contemporary philosopher.¹⁶

After earning his degree, Marx moved back from Bonn to Trier with the hope of beginning an academic career, although the political climate made this unlikely. One factor was the dismissal of Bruno Bauer, his young Hegelian friend, who lost his teaching job for proposing a left-wing toast. It is possible that Marx collaborated with him in preparing a pamphlet published anonymously in November 1841: "The Trumpet of the Last Judgment on Hegel the Atheist and Antichrist."¹⁷ Marx was sufficiently interested in Bauer's situation to write an article in November 1842 defending him and academic freedom against the critique of a certain Dr. O. F. Gruppe (1804–76), a publicist and idealist philosopher.¹⁸ Marx remained interested in the issue, since he ended an article written in the first months of 1842, which only appeared in 1843, "Comments on the most recent Prussian Censorship Instruction," with a citation from Tacitus: "What a rare pleasure to think what you will and say what you think."¹⁹

Since his prospects for an academic career were bleak, in April 1842 Marx moved to Bonn, where he became the editor of a newspaper, *Die Rheinische Zeitung*, in Cologne, a neighboring city near the Dutch border. Here he continued his interest in freedom, going so far as to note that freedom is the essence of human being,²⁰ and that unfreedom is for man precisely (equivalent to) fear of death.²¹ At this point, Marx saw a connection between freedom from censorship and freedom, although he had not yet begun to link mean-

ingful freedom to economic conditions. He also began to come into contact, through articles by Hess and others, with the ideas of various French socialists, particularly C.-H. de Rouvray (1760–1825), Count Saint-Simon, usually known simply as Saint-Simon, the utopian socialist. While in Cologne, he also began to read Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804–72), his contemporary, who was originally a Hegelian, but who later became a strong Hegelian critic.

Marx's critical articles, in fact his initial texts on economic questions, quickly attracted the attention of the censors, causing the government to shut the paper down and Marx to resign in spring 1843. In May, Marx was in Dresden, where he talked with Arnold Ruge, the German radical and writer, about the idea of jointly publishing German–French yearbooks (*Deutsch–französische Jahrbücher*). At the end of May, he moved to Kreuznach where he began to work on a study of Hegel's view of the state in the *Philosophy of Right* and where on June 19, 1843 he married his fiancée, Jenny von Westphalen, to whom he had by now been engaged seven years. In October, the newly married couple left for Paris, where they lived until February.

This short stay in Paris was to prove decisive for Marx's future course for a number of reasons. In Paris, Marx continued his nascent study of political economy begun earlier in Cologne. It is in Paris in August 1844 that he again met Friedrich Engels, with whom he formed a relationship which endured until his death. While Marx was in Paris, the only issue of the *Deutsch–Französische Jahrbücher* appeared. It is also in Paris that he formulated the outlines of his view of modern industrial society which he later elaborated and extended but never basically changed. In Paris, too, Marx's inability to support his family through any regular source of income became a chronic problem even as the first child, Jenny, arrived in May 1844. The precarious situation of the Marx family moved H. F. Claessen (1813–83), a German liberal who supported the paper which Marx briefly edited in Cologne, to talk about opening a national subscription on Marx's behalf.²² And finally in Paris Marx came in contact with other important figures who later played a role in his life, including Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–65), the French worker turned economist, M. A. Bakunin (1814–76), the Russian anarchist, Alexander Herzen (1812–70), the important Russian writer, Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), the great German poet, and so on.

The single issue of the yearbook, on which Marx briefly collaborated with Ruge before turning against him (a constant in his uneasy relation with almost all collaborators other than Engels), contained two important early articles by Marx and one by Engels. These included Marx's introduction to the critique of Hegel's political philosophy; his pointed response to two

articles published in 1843 by Bruno Bauer on the relation of Judaism and Christianity; and Engels's essay, which influenced Marx, "Outline of a Critique of Political Economy."

After the end of his dissertation, Marx continued his philosophical studies while changing their focus. In the dissertation, he discussed other theories within a broadly Hegelian framework. In two other texts from this period, Marx began a long critique of this same framework, which stretched forward throughout all his later writings, initially through critical discussion of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in a detailed paragraph-by-paragraph examination of a section of the work, shortly thereafter in a more general reflection on the entire book. Between the two critical discussions of Hegel, Marx took time to write a critical study of his young Hegelian colleagues. Although he did not later stop using insights gleaned from Hegel, in the future he also did not stop criticizing Hegel.

In a letter to Ruge in early 1842, Marx mentions his intention to criticize Hegel's theory of law.²³ "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" is a long, unfinished study in which Marx examines Hegel's conception of the state in some detail. Prior to writing this critique, Marx had begun to read Feuerbach, whose influence on his thinking is obvious. Strauss's controversial claim that the incarnation occurred, not in a single individual, but in the entire human race, quickly led to further attacks on Christianity by Bruno Bauer and Feuerbach. Bauer maintained that the true result of Hegelianism is neither pantheism nor theism, but atheism. Feuerbach was a former student of Hegel and Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher (1768–1834), the important Protestant theologian, best known for the creation of modern religious hermeneutics (the interpretation of sacred texts).

Feuerbach was the author of a remarkable book, *The Essence of Christianity* (1841),²⁴ in which, through so-called transformational criticism, he inverted the usual view of the relation between God and human being. He anticipated Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in arguing that human beings create the idea of God,²⁵ who is not the source of human beings. He applied transformational criticism to Hegel in his *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1843),²⁶ where, accepting the right-wing, conservative view of Hegelian philosophy as theology, he opposed to it a left-wing, radical revision on strictly anthropological lines. Just as the secret of theology is anthropology, so the secret of Hegel's speculative philosophy is that it is theology, which substitutes an abstract analysis for the real material world, in a word a theological form of philosophy for human reality. Against those who urged that in Hegel philosophy had come to an end, Feuerbach proposes a new

philosophy intended to realize Hegel's philosophy. He insists that the prior philosophical tradition peaks in Hegel and that through the critique of Hegel the new philosophy will realize Hegel's.²⁷

Feuerbach's view that Hegel's position is essentially a mystified form of theology suggests the need from an anthropological perspective to show that man, not God, is the root of man. In "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," Marx develops a Feuerbachian critique of Hegel. As his first text overtly critical of Hegel, it serves as a standard by which all later Marxian criticism of Hegel should be measured. At this point, Marx's language and form of discussion are still very close to those of the budding professional philosopher or advanced graduate student. The whole discussion, which rests on very close textual examination of a portion of Hegel's book, numbered paragraph by numbered paragraph, shows an effort to think with Hegel against Hegel. In reading Hegel in this way, Marx enters into a critical dialogue with his predecessor which continues explicitly or more often implicitly in all his later writings. Absent here is any reference to other writers, although Marx constantly refers to historical phenomena to test Hegel's philosophical formulations. The text, which Marx did not prepare for publication, is repetitive and somewhat painful to read. It gives the impression of a highly intelligent thinker attempting to work out his own view by struggling with Hegel's theory of contemporary society, then the dominant philosophical conception.

Marx's main complaint is that civil society is in fact very different from and more important than Hegel's grasp of it. Although Hegel postulates an identity of interest between individuals and the state, Marx insists that the single most important factor is the role of private property in and through civil society. It is, then, not the state which determines civil society, but rather civil society, and, prior to it, the institution of private property, which determine the state.

A short summary will suffice to indicate some main points in Marx's discussion. The entire study turns on the claim that Hegel misrepresents an unresolved tension because of his supposed failure to appreciate the role of private property. Marx identifies the alleged Hegelian failure to resolve real tensions in his model of the state at the very beginning of his text, and continues to hammer away at that point in different ways throughout the essay. But he says less about the idea of private property, which is the central stick-point.

Marx begins by noting that, according to Hegel, so-called concrete freedom consists in a postulated identity between the particular interests of the family and civil society and the general interests of the state.²⁸ Hegel sets up

an “unresolved *antinomy*,” a Kantian term, indicating a conflict of reason, or contradiction (III, 6). Rather than resolving the tension, Hegel only supplies a “logical, pantheistic mysticism” (III, 7). This is manifest in his substitution of an idea for the real subject, which reduces the latter to an imaginary predicate (III, 8). The family and civil society really produce the state, but Hegel incorrectly sees them as produced by the idea (III, 8–9). Marx sums up his methodological criticism by accusing Hegel of a Feuerbachian inversion of subject and predicate: “The fact which is taken as a point of departure is not conceived as such, but as a mystical result” (III, 9). In a word, Hegel fails to grasp the specificity of what occurs (III, 12). He makes use of the state as an example of his preexisting logic rather than grasping the logic of the state (III, 18). Once again, Hegel’s error lies in transforming a mere idea of the state into a mystical subject, since he does not begin from real human subjects (III, 23). In consequence, Hegel masks the antithesis between private property (*Privateigentum*, from German *privat*, meaning “private,” and *Eigentum*, meaning “property”), particular interests, and the interests of the state (III, 49). He incorrectly maintains that the state is the highest form of freedom, although in fact it is blind natural necessity which is at work (III, 56). He does not construct the organic unity he has in view (III, 58) since he only considers subjective freedom (III, 62). The estates (*Stände*), or social classes, are concerned, not with general good, but with their own good (III, 63). Although Hegel sees the separation of civil society and the political state, he mistakenly insists on a unity between the state and civil society (III, 74). The estates, which Hegel sees as mediating between monarch and executive, or the monarch and the nation, are opposed to civil society (III, 92). The illusion that the state is the central power is dashed on the rock of private property, which determines the state (III, 100). Hegel quite monstrously claims that the state is the actuality of the ethical idea when in fact the ethical idea is the religion of private property (III, 102). In describing the state as a monarch, Hegel does not grasp it, since he does not grasp the role of private property (III, 108). Hegel, who makes civil society depend on a preceding idea, has no grasp of its real empirical content (III, 116). Political representation is not separate from civil society, as Hegel would have it, but rather its political expression (III, 123).

Engels correctly saw this unfinished discussion of Hegel’s philosophy of law, or right, as crucial for Marx’s turn to political economy.²⁹ For present purposes, two points will be important here. First, we must ask ourselves whether Marx’s critique of Hegel does justice to Hegel, or rather rests on an incorrect reading of the position. Second, we must ask ourselves whether and to what degree, in spite of his critique of Hegel, Marx remains a Hegelian,

hence the significance of his critique of Hegel for his own nascent thought.

The texts of major philosophers are routinely read in different ways in the literature about them. Marx's critique of Hegel presupposes a right-wing, theological reading of the latter's position, which he refutes through a left-wing, anti-theological reading. A right-wing reading, which is also presupposed in Feuerbach's transformational critique of Hegel, typically sees Hegel's position as a disguised form of theology in which God is the central actor. In Marx's left-wing critique, Hegel errs in substituting a fictitious subject, or the state as the manifestation of God, for the real subject in society, which can be traced to private property.³⁰ The disagreement between Hegel and Marx comes down to a supposed difference about the institution of private property.

It would be incorrect to claim that Marx focuses attention on private property which Hegel somehow overlooks. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel begins the discussion of abstract right, or legal relations, with a lengthy account of aspects of the institution of private property, which he sees as a means to the satisfaction of needs. The difference lies in the appreciation of the role of private property. Hegel, who understands its legal importance in the context of human needs, does not grasp its further role as a driving force in civil society. He correctly regards political economy as starting from "needs and labor,"³¹ but does not perceive the specific economic role of private property. Marx's contribution lies in extending Hegel's analysis of private property, which the latter limits to legal right, to the economic dimension of society. His later writings work out his insight into the economic role of private property in the modern state.

More Early Criticism of Hegel: "On the Jewish Question"

Although Marx continued and considerably deepened his conceptual jousting with Hegel in later writings, he never again did so in such detail. For Marx, the process of coming to grips with Hegel included criticism of his predecessor as well as the young Hegelians, Marx's contemporaries. His criticism of the young Hegelians sends him back to Hegel, beginning with criticism of Bruno Bauer in an early article before more detailed discussion and criticism several years later in *The Holy Family*.

"On the Jewish Question" betrays an unfortunate anti-Semitic cast, which has often been criticized.³² Marx here begins to formulate his own theory of civil society in the process of answering Bauer. Feuerbach's influence is clear

in references to species-life and species-being. These are two concepts Feuerbach employs in *The Essence of Christianity* and which Marx will utilize again in the famous account of alienation in the *Paris Manuscripts*.

Marx's discussion is cast as a response to an earlier article by Bauer, his young Hegelian colleague, who claimed that the political emancipation of German Jews required the political emancipation of mankind.³³ Marx objects that Bauer has failed to examine the relation between political emancipation and human emancipation. In Marx's opinion, the former is only a stage in the realization of the latter. By inference, a theory of human emancipation, which Bauer does not provide, since he is concerned only with political emancipation, remains to be formulated.

In answering Bauer, Marx begins to formulate the conception of human being, required by his earlier critique of Hegel, in appealing to Feuerbach and Rousseau. He takes over Feuerbach's concept of species-life as perfected in the political state, as opposed to civil society, where each person is a private person (B 13; III, 153–4). Marx presumably has in mind the distinction between the rights of man, which are limited to the isolated individual, and those of a citizen. Rousseau famously argues for a fictitious conception of man in a state of nature, prior to modern society, as free, hence presumably happy. Marx, who adapts this view, suggests that human emancipation requires what he calls the restoration of the human world, supposedly destroyed by modern life, and of human relations as suggested in the idea of species-life (B 31; III, 168).

The second, shorter part of the discussion, which is less interesting, also has the unfortunately anti-Semitic tone noted above. The disgraceful image Marx presents here of the so-called real Jew as distinguished from Bauer's supposedly sabbath Jew is scarcely flattering to Jews, whom Marx simply caricatures, or to its author. His main point, for which he presents no proof, is that the Jewish religion revolves around money. Like Hegel in the *Phenomenology*, who is not named, Marx argues that Judaism is a deficient form of Christianity. Unlike Hegel, Marx further straightforwardly contends that Jews can only be emancipated by emancipating society from them (B 40; III, 174).

More Early Criticism of Hegel: "Contribution to the Critique of 'Hegel's Philosophy of Right': Introduction"

In this early text on Hegel, Marx returns from his criticism of Bauer, the young Hegelian, to criticism of his great predecessor. The discussion addresses the problem of human self-realization central to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*

through remarks on religion, a topic already addressed in the response to Bauer, and offers a series of pointed comments on philosophy. Bauer's purported inability to think through the conditions of real human freedom recurs as the main complaint in Marx's critique of Hegel's conception of the modern state.

Marx, who thought that philosophy had not solved (or resolved) its problem(s), did not share his young Hegelian colleagues' view that philosophy ends with Hegel. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Marx's account is his suggestion that in realizing its task philosophy will be abolished. Kant thought that prior philosophy was uncritical, hence not worthy of the name, but in his own critical philosophy it had achieved its goal. Like Kant, Marx seems to think that philosophy has specific tasks which, since they can be realized, simply abolishes any further need for philosophy.

The discussion begins by continuing the polemic against religion begun in response to Bruno Bauer before turning to Hegel. Once again taking a Feuerbachian line, Marx suggests that as a human product religion offers no more than an illusory realization of human being. This claim clearly anticipates the view of ideology later elaborated in *The German Ideology*. Marx, who is obviously working with a Hegelian distinction between a false, or illusory, and a correct conception of social reality, then adds, in a famous line, that religion is "the *opium* of the people" (B 44; III, 175). In rejecting a view of philosophy as neutral, he depicts it as basically devoted to realizing the specifically human good. In the same way as the critique of religion unmasks religious alienation, philosophy's task lies in unmasking the secular form of human self-alienation (B 44; III, 176)

This claim is doubly significant. To begin with, in following Feuerbach's suggestion of the parallel between the critique of religion and philosophy, Marx suggests a distinction between (orthodox) philosophy, which presumably is at best socially irrelevant, and a different kind of philosophy in the service of human beings.³⁴ The former, which merely preserves the status quo, might be exemplified by Hegel's (supposedly "official") theory of the state. By inference human alienation can be alleviated by negating a false image of modern society: human self-alienation can be alleviated. Marx, who believes that alienation is self-imposed, suggests with Feuerbach that the solution to real social problems lies not in religion but in ourselves.

What is the use of attempting to resolve problems of human self-alienation by criticizing philosophy? Marx's answer is that in Germany, where development has lagged behind countries such as France or England, Germans still live in and through philosophy – philosophy is a kind of ideal prolongation of German history (B 48; III, 179) – above all in Hegel's *Philosophy of*

Right (B 50; III, 181). In comparison to Marx's earlier critique of Hegel, the difference lies in the claim that Hegel represents the high point of contemporary German self-understanding.

In a review of two reactions against Hegel, Marx now proposes a third possibility. In his opinion, "the practical political party," or his young Hegelian colleagues, incorrectly suggests "the negation of philosophy" which cannot occur unless it is realized (B 50; III, 181). Why? Because at stake is the replacement of a false, philosophical conception of the social world by a true one. Conversely, the so-called theoretical party, or right-wing Hegelians, are guilty of the opposite error in supposing that philosophy could be realized without abolishing it (B 51; III, 181).

So far, Marx has made two claims: philosophy cannot be abolished without realizing it, and it cannot be realized without abolishing it. If we recall that German philosophy is the expression of German self-consciousness, this suggests a conception of philosophy as confronted with a finite, resolvable task, on whose completion it would, as it were, cease to exist. Marx, who is working here with a notion of philosophy very far from the conceptual struggle between competing views, has a romantic idea of the definitive solution of the problem of human self-alienation as brought about, or at least set in motion, through the critique of philosophy. If one thinks that Marx's position is philosophy, one could infer that his intention is to resolve the problems philosophy addresses through a different form of philosophy.

Marx now applies his view that philosophy cannot be abolished without realizing it to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* which, he claims from a Feuerbachian angle of vision, fails to take into account "*real man*" (B 51; III, 181). In affirming that the task to which Hegel's philosophy addresses itself can be solved through practical activity (B 52; III, 181), Marx again suggests that theoretical tasks can be resolved in practice and that the problem of human self-alienation is amenable to human practice. Once again siding with Feuerbach, in a memorable phrase Marx writes: "To be radical is to grasp things by the root. But for man the root is man himself" (B 52; III, 182). The solution lies in understanding that men have to change the conditions which prevent them from meeting their needs in what they do. Now shifting gears to compare himself to Martin Luther (1483–1546), the great Protestant theologian and initiator of the Protestant Reformation, Marx suggests that the contemporary revolution begins in the brain of a philosopher, that is, himself. Continuing the analogy, he asserts that philosophy, by inference his own position, will shatter the present status quo in Germany (B 53; III, 182).

In the discussion of the Jewish question, Marx claimed against Bauer that

political emancipation was not a practical possibility without human emancipation. Now extending this argument, he advances the counter-claim that human emancipation is not utopian but practical if and only if it can be brought about by a class representing society as a whole. It follows that, at least for Germany, the real possibility of emancipation depends on the existence of a class in civil society "which can redeem itself by a *total redemption of humanity*" (B 58; III, 186).

Two points should be noted here. On the one hand, Marx simply postulates the need for a particular class to emerge which, in liberating all classes, will supposedly abolish the class structure of society. This amounts to a philosophical "deduction" of the condition of real human self-emancipation. In a word, Marx is stating what he regards as the real conditions of human emancipation, indispensable in his opinion for political emancipation. On the other hand, he does not now point to this class as existing, but rather as only beginning to exist in Germany as the result of the unfolding of modern capitalism. The main idea is that the normal development of industrial society will bring about the end of a particular way of life. Which way of life? The way of life which depends on the institution of private property, or the private ownership of the means of production which, since the means of production belong to the capitalists, is denied to the proletariat.

Marx sums up the revolutionary message of his philosophical analysis, which is intended not only to describe but also to change the social status quo, in contending that philosophy realizes itself through the proletariat. We recall that for Marx German philosophy provides the highest but still inadequate form of self-consciousness. He is suggesting that human freedom, which was Hegel's aim, can be realized through the abolition of the proletariat, which in turn will abolish the class structure of society; and, conversely, the proletariat, whose existence derives from that class structure, can be abolished in realizing the aim of philosophy (B 59; III, 187).

Introduction to the *Paris Manuscripts*

Marx's stay in Paris was especially fruitful for the genesis of his own distinctive theories. Before he went to France, he criticized Hegel and the young Hegelians in ways which suggested he might himself one day formulate an important position of his own. In Paris, he very quickly formulated the initial version of a position he extended in important ways but never later basically changed.

The early writings are, as the name suggests, not well developed, often

jumping from topic to topic. In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx has not yet found his mature voice. But taken as a whole, this collection of texts provides an astonishingly mature, more developed discussion which, since its tardy publication, has become central to understanding Marx's position. From a philosophical perspective, five themes are important here. First, Marx now provides the general outlines of the conception of modern society toward which he has been working in his critique of Hegel and Hegelianism. Only a year after he began to work out his ideas, he already possesses the same position which receives its final, still incomplete formulation in *Capital*. Second, we find Marx continuing his critique of Hegel by addressing the *Phenomenology* rather than the *Philosophy of Right*. Third, as opposed to earlier efforts during his brief period as a newspaper editor, Marx now for the first time directly criticizes political economy, whose analysis has been constantly presupposed but never directly provided in his prior writings. His discussion shows an enormous improvement in his grasp of this theme when measured against the scattered remarks in his preceding writings. Fourth, he takes up in greater detail the relation of philosophy and political economy, which is central to an appreciation of the relation between the earlier and later writings, hence to an understanding of the nature of Marx's project. Fifth, the so-called humanist element in Marx's thought, which has been lurking in Marx's writings, for instance in his attention to the supposed link between political emancipation and human emancipation, and which has received extensive attention in a large literature,³⁵ now makes an explicit appearance.

The *Paris Manuscripts* (or, as we have already noted, the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* or the *Manuscripts of 1844*), whose title is due not to Marx but to an editor, comprise a connected series of three manuscripts containing Marx's analyses of political economy, a theme which runs throughout the whole text, a theory of alienation in the first manuscript making good on hints at a concept of alienation in writings up to this point, a detailed critique of Hegel in the third manuscript, and a critique of political economy. The text, which is unfinished, is often difficult to read. It is filled with a long series of quotations, mainly from earlier economists such as Smith; but also David Ricardo (1772–1823), whom Marx consistently regards here and later as the most important contemporary economist; Jean-Baptiste Say (1767–1832), an industrialist and economist influenced by Smith, and others. These quotations often hide the main line of argument. But taken as a whole, this text is a work of great power and originality, marking the place early in his writings where Marx, only several years after receiving his doctorate in philosophy, has already found a fresh and original voice. This is not the birth of his mature position, which really begins in his initial critique of Hegel, more

precisely the latter's failure to grasp the economic role of private property. Yet it is the first place where its main lines, which will develop and deepen, but remain basically the same throughout his later writings, can be clearly discerned.

The link to Hegel is clear in the preface, which is taken from the third manuscript. Marx here refers to his earlier critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, and states his intention to publish separate critiques of law, morals, politics, and so on, which were never written. He then indicates his desire to show the interconnection between the various parts of the discussion, while criticizing Hegel's speculative treatment of it.

Marx, who is aware of his predecessors, relates his critique of political economy to Hess and Engels, and his critique of Hegel to Feuerbach. Despite the interest of the Feuerbach, a (real) critique of Hegel remains to be carried out. Although a critical theologian, Feuerbach remains a theologian. His theological critique is continuous with, hence does not finally break with, Hegel's view. While Marx still relies on Feuerbach in this work, he is clearly preparing to criticize the latter in later writings, notably in the famous "Theses on Feuerbach." The perceived limitations of Feuerbach's critique of Hegel suggest this theme will be important to Marx here and perhaps in later writings.

Marx now sketches the outlines of his own position, which typically consists of three parts: a critique of modern industrial society and its comprehension in (orthodox) political economy; a critique of Hegel; and a rival economic theory of industrial society which depends, as he indicates, on both Hess and Engels. Hess, who was a co-founder of the newspaper in Cologne which Marx briefly edited, is important in this context for his crucial distinction between socialism and communism.

Engels and Marx's Economic View of Modern Society

Any sketch of the genesis of Marx's view of political economy needs to start with Engels. Engels's "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy"³⁶ (1843) produced a strong, durable impression on Marx. He later refers to it four times in the first volume of *Capital*.

Engels's article is a critique of political economy from a socialist perspective. He begins in noting that political economy arose as the natural result of trade. Since, according to Engels, modern economics shares the same presuppositions as modern trade, he proposes to study its basic categories to uncover their contradictions, or conceptual confusions (III, 421).³⁷

Following orthodox political economy, Engels notes that trade, which is the immediate result of the effect of private property, and on which it depends, concerns the effort to mediate needs through buying and selling (III, 422). Value, which depends on trade, includes both abstract, or real, and exchange forms (III, 422). According to economists, the costs of production include the rent for land, the cost of raw materials, and capital; and "capital and work are identical" (III, 427; trans. modified). The reason is that, as economists have seen, capital is nothing more than stored work (III, 430).

Now drawing the consequences, Engels claims that, for political economy, everything depends on increasing the original separation of capital and work, or the distinction between the capitalist and the worker (430). The institution of private property transforms human beings into mere commodities (III, 439–40). Competition turns capital against capital, and worker against worker, leading to an increasingly polarized situation in which the middle class disappears as the world divides into millionaires and paupers (III, 441).

Engels's analysis of political economy is taken over and elaborated by Marx in his view of modern society. Unlike Engels, whose discussion is limited to a critique of modern political economy, Marx here formulates a wider, more inclusive position in a theory of modern industrial society.

Like Engels, Marx studies standard categories of modern liberal political economy, in this case labor, capital, and land. In the first manuscript, he considers wages, profit, and rent – all categories studied by orthodox economists as well as Engels – and alienation. The second manuscript is devoted to private property. The third manuscript takes up private property and work, private property and communism, then needs, production, and the division of labor, as well as money, before presenting a further critique of Hegel.

The three sections in the first manuscript on the basic categories of orthodox political economy are roughly equal in length. Marx throughout refers to such political economists as Smith – in later writings, he will increasingly emphasize Ricardo as the most important contemporary economist, the only one Marx was able to respect – to argue that modern capitalism is not stable, but inherently unstable. The discussion of the "Wages of labor" points to the struggle, based on different interests, between the capitalist, or owner of the means of production, and the worker, and between workers for scarce jobs, which tends to reduce wages, or salaries, to the lowest possible level. Like a commodity, the worker depends on supply and demand. In the struggle between the worker and the capitalist, the latter has the upper hand.

According to Marx, the normal functioning of modern society is not helpful but harmful for worker and capitalist alike, but above all for the worker. He later elaborates this idea through detailed accounts of the lot of the Eng-

lish worker in *Capital*. To use contemporary language, when the economy is not good, as in a recession or depression, workers lose their jobs. This seems obvious enough. But in a good economy or even in boom times, if there are more workers than jobs the individual worker suffers in various ways, for instance through the increasing division of labor following on increased demand. Capitalists are also not insulated from the vagaries of capitalism, since competition among them reduces their ranks and adversely affects workers who depend on them. It follows that in all cases, in good times and bad, modern industrial society does not help but rather harms workers.

Marx addresses the significance of this claim in contending that capitalism tends to reduce workers merely to their capacity to work, which is their sole interest for potential employers. He notes, through extensive quotation, that for economists a worker is equivalent to acquisitive activity, that is, to whatever increases capital, or money-making. The worker is reduced to and interesting only as a source of such work, what he later refers to as labor-power.

After the analysis of wages, Marx turns to the "Profit of capital" in a discussion divided into sections on capital, profit, the capitalist, and the relation of capital to work, and the accumulation of capital and competition among capitalists. He begins by establishing a relation of identity, or equivalence, between three elements: workers, capitalists, and capital. The worker is the source of work-activity tending to produce wealth for the capitalist, the person who owns the means of production, for instance in the context of a factory, and the financial form taken by wealth is capital. Wealth does not appear from nowhere. It emerges as a product within liberal economy in which, through work, commodities are produced for sale. Work (or labor) – these terms are equivalent translations of the German word *Arbeit* – is the source of the increase in value whose monetary form is capital and "capital is *stored-up labor*" (B 85; III, 247). There is a vast distinction between the earlier recognition that private property is central to comprehend modern industrial society and the link Marx now draws between private property and individual human beings. Since labor is the basis of capital, and capital is privately owned, the owner of the means of production literally owns "the products of other men's labor" (B 85; III, 246).

Having defined capital, Marx now differentiates it from wages. As capitalists are not philanthropists, they are naturally interested in profiting from the productive process. In theory, profit is maximized when a product's sale price not only covers the rent and all other expenses of production but the worker's salary is reduced to a strict minimum. In general, the owner of the means of production profits in two ways: through the division of labor; or

through increasing the amount of work as opposed to raw materials in a product since, unlike the latter, the cost of work can be reduced.

The section on the relation of capital to work is wholly composed of a series of quotations from Smith and Say which singly and together point to the idea that someone with capital only invests to increase the original amount of money, which seems obvious enough. In remarks on the accumulation of capital, Marx notes the antagonism between wages and profit, which vary inversely. Society can only protect itself against capitalists through competition between them. Such competition, which depends on the fact that more than one person possesses capital, normally tends to concentrate economic power in the hands of the few. Certainly, small capitalists are at a disadvantage in confronting those richer than they, who benefit from advantages of scale, for instance by buying in quantity, and so on.

The discussion about the rent of land begins with the idea, here attributed to Say, but also developed by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65), that property is based on theft. Disagreeing with economists like Smith who comprehend rent as a function of the yield or the location of land, Marx suggests it depends on an opposition between tenant and landlord. Their interests are dissimilar since the landlord is opposed to the interests of the tenant, and so on. More important is the fact that the distinction between capitalists and landowners tends to disappear since capitalists tend to take over land, which is then transformed into industrial property as capitalism extends throughout society. In the normal course of events only two classes will remain, “the working class and the capitalist class” (B 113; III, 266). This supposed result will be the triumph of money which, in transforming landed property, or land, which is historically the original form of private property, into a mere commodity, replaces earlier social forms by capitalism. This will be, as Marx remarks, “the complete domination of living men by dead matter” (B 115; III, 267).

Marx's view of modern industrial society centers on private property, which he addresses in what remains of the very brief second manuscript. He begins by emphasizing the effect of capital on the individual who, since people must meet their needs in the social context, is reduced to the status of a worker. Capital, which is the real subject of capitalism, not only produces commodities, but literally produces “man as a *commodity*” (B 138; III, 284). The relation to capital is intrinsically dehumanizing since profit is increased by decreasing wages.

Private property includes such subforms as work, capital, and their interaction. The existence of private property, which channels people into specific types of work within modern society in order to meet their needs, leads

to "the production of human activity as *labor*" (B 139; III, 285). In this way, particular individuals play a general role in which all specific traits are lost. Conversely, through production, objects, which are only produced in order to be sold, are transformed as a result of the process into capital. Marx goes on to argue that a similar struggle opposes capital to land, moveable capital to fixed capital, or developed private property to undeveloped private property, leading, finally, to the victory of the capitalist over the landowner.

The third manuscript, which considers a number of aspects of private property, begins with the crucial claim that "The subjective essence of *private* property . . . is labor" (B 147; III, 290) as the source of capital. Marx extolls Smith for grasping that private property depends on human beings, but stresses against him that work results not only in profit for those who own the means of production but also in human alienation for those who do not.

Marx next turns to the relation of private property and communism. The opposition within modern society between work and capital, or the worker and the capitalist, is not stable, since in the long run modern industrial society, which is merely the latest stage of social development, is itself unstable. Capitalism, which is characterized by the institution of private property, will in principle be superseded by communism, which will be characterized by the absence of private property. It should be noted that Marx's philosophical concept of communism has only the name in common with later forms of real communism.

Marx distinguishes two types of communism, which will occur in successive stages. The first stage, described as crude communism, resembles what would now be called state capitalism. It is characterized by the universalization of private property, the extension of the role of the worker to everyone, the negation of human individuality, and the reduction of everyone to "a *preconceived* minimum" (B 153; III, 295). The origin of the Marxian conception of communism is unclear. One may speculate that Marx is thinking here of the primitive communism featured in Plato's *Republic*. It is difficult to overlook the prescient resemblance between this concept and "real" communism as it came into being in the wake of the Russian Revolution. This resemblance is strengthened by Marx's insistence that this initial type of communism is still ruled by a form of private property, typical of types of state capitalism practiced during the twentieth century.

The second type of communism is defined by the abolition of private property which, in surpassing alienation, qualifies as "the real *appropriation* of *human* nature through and for man" (B 155; III, 296). This claim depends upon a distinction, correlated to stages of the development of society, between a person as a mere worker, who is only able to meet basic, or

subsistence needs, and as a fully developed individual. In principle, those who meet their needs within the economic reality of modern industrial society, which merely alienates them for their trouble, hence impeding or even preventing further development, will be able to develop as individuals in communism. In distantly recalling Hegel's idea that human history turns on the idea of freedom, Marx confidently observes that the second phase of communism is "the solution of the riddle of history" (B 155; III, 296–7).

This claim is not easy to interpret. One possibility is "the accomplished union of man with nature" (B 157; III, 298) in which, beyond merely meeting basic needs, and in surpassing the pressure of institutionalized private property, people might make use of the natural world for additional human goals. Another is the relation to the objects we produce. Marx waxes lyrical in claiming that, for someone freed from economic pressure, nature is not merely useful but also a means to develop in relating to things for their own sake, and, since we make the objects, to ourselves as well. His point is that "The objects then confirm and realize his individuality [for the very good reason that] they are his objects" (B 161; III, 301). The obvious presupposition is that a person only becomes an individual in the appropriate setting through activity resulting in the concrete manifestation of human capacities, in "the objectification of the human essence" (B 162; III, 302).

The analysis of the conditions and significance of the transition from capitalism (defined by the institution of private property) to forms of communism (generalizing or transcending private property) ends with the remark that "communism is not itself the goal of human development – the form of human society" (B 167; III, 306). Even communism is merely another transitory phase in the stage-wise evolution of human society, but there is no idea of what Marx thinks ought to come after it.

After this discussion of private property, Marx turns to remarks on the relation of needs, production and the division of labor, and then directly to money. He makes two points as concerns money in modern society and the division of labor. Modern society turns on nothing more nor less than "the need for money" (B 168; III, 306). In capitalism, money, which appears to be no more than a means to an end, is rather "the real power and the unique end" (B 177; III, 314), the goal of modern life.

The division of labor, which makes good economic sense, is antithetical to the full development of individual people. Marx describes the division of labor in Feuerbachian language as "the *perceptible, alienated* expression of human activity and capacities as the activity and capacities *proper to a species*" (B 187; III, 321).

Marx, who was highly educated by any standard, was particularly interested in literary classics. It is known that he reread the classical Greek plays in Greek and Shakespeare in English every year. In the passage on money, Marx cites and comments on a long quotation from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. His obvious point is, once again, that in modern industrial society literally everything turns on and is for sale for money.

Marx's Theory of Alienation

I have summarized some main aspects of Marx's economic analysis in all three manuscripts without interrupting the flow of the argument to consider the hugely important discussion of alienation inserted in the last part of the first manuscript. Since the publication of the *Paris Manuscripts* it has been realized that this concept is central to Marx's early position and, I believe, although this is controversial, to his later position as well. The term "alienation" occurs throughout Marx's writings, from the early critique of Hegel, for instance in "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right"³⁸ and in the essay "On the Jewish Question,"³⁹ to *Capital*.⁴⁰

The concept of alienation, understood as a separation which can be overcome by recreating unity, has a long and complex lineage.⁴¹ To begin with, it is obviously present in Christian theology which features the idea of human redemption through Jesus Christ in a return to God. Forms of this idea run throughout modern philosophy. The first chapter of Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762) begins with the famous observation: "Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains."⁴² This observation provides a secular formulation of the Christian view of the fall from a primitive state of grace, according to Rousseau the mythical state of nature, which has simply vanished in modern society. The first German idealist to discuss alienation is Fichte, who obscurely refers in passing to the need of the self, or human individual, to overcome all restrictions in order to be self-identical.⁴³

Hegel greatly develops the concept of alienation. In the *Phenomenology* he draws an important distinction between objectification and alienation. Objectification is the way in which an individual "concretizes" himself in the making of an object, thereby generating a relation between himself as someone who acts and himself in external or objectified form, literally as an object. Objectification need not, but can, lead on to alienation, a further stage, which occurs through a division or split within the subject, or human individual which can then be said to be separated from itself. Objectification is wider than and a condition of alienation.

Alienation is a main theme in Hegel's writings. He understands phenomenology as reflective contemplation of the world in which people objectify themselves in what they do, say in their productive activity, in and through which they become aware of themselves.⁴⁴ He discusses many different types of alienation. Revealed religion, for instance, is said to make us aware of ourselves in that human beings give concrete form to their beliefs, hence return in this way to themselves.⁴⁵ Hegel's famous discussion of the interaction between master and slave,⁴⁶ which clearly influenced Marx's view of capitalism, is often seen as a metaphor for modern industrial society where capitalists and workers are opposed. We become aware of ourselves in and through what we do. Slaves, servants, workers, all employees who depend on masters, owners, and proprietors for work, even for life itself, exist in and through what they do to earn a living. In Hegel's opinion, the slave, or more generally any individual in a subordinate position, achieves an initial, minimal form of self-consciousness in productive activity.⁴⁷ Although in appropriating the product, the master literally appropriates, hence alienates, slaves, the latter, in becoming at least minimally aware of themselves, or minimally self-conscious, are emboldened to throw off the shackles binding them to their masters.

In the *Philosophy of Right*, where Hegel discusses the alienation of property in detail,⁴⁸ he follows Locke's view that our property depends on our labor.⁴⁹ Hegel notes that property is only mine, hence can only be alienated, because "I put my will into it."⁵⁰ He goes on to argue that, in a striking anticipation of Marx's view of alienation, a person who works for someone else "alienates" himself in the form of his work, in which he transforms himself into the property of another: "By alienating the whole of my time, as crystalized in my work, and everything I produced, I would be making into another's property the substance of my being, my universal activity and actuality, my personality."⁵¹

In the section on alienation, Marx brilliantly elaborates this Hegelian theme. Roughly following Hegel, Marx presupposes a distinction between objectification and alienation.⁵² He differs from Hegel in two ways. First, he more clearly links alienation to modern industrial society. Second, he suggests that human beings will in principle be able to develop as individuals in a future communist society through objectification which will no longer lead to alienation.

In simplest terms, Marx distinguishes four forms of alienation, beginning with the alienation of a worker from the product of his work in two ways, in a physical sense as external to him and in a non-physical sense as alien to his self-development. For the individual, the consequences of alienation include vitiation in which life-activity is drained in the production of the object; a

loss in that the product belongs, not to the worker, but to the owner of the means of production; and a Feuerbachian inversion in that the person who produces the object depends on it, for instance for his livelihood.

Marx similarly maintains that the worker is alienated from his productive activity in that he does not freely develop in his work, for instance by developing whatever capacities typify him as a human being. He merely meets his basic needs as best he can. The worker is freely active, not within the production process, but rather in such "animal functions" as "eating, drinking, and procreating" (B 125; III, 274) and so on. It follows that someone caught up in the life of a worker is reduced to the level of an animal able to sustain its physical existence, but certainly not capable of developing to a higher level.

From these two types of alienation, Marx now infers a third type, that is, that in modern society the worker is alienated from species-life. The very possibility of manifesting the capacities which characterize a person as a human being is blocked by the role most of us assume within the process of production in order to meet our needs. For work serves solely as "a means for his *existence*" (B 127; III, 276). Marx goes on to claim that the worker is alienated from his body, from external nature, from his mental life, and from human life in general, each of which would ordinarily serve as a way for a person to satisfy other desires going beyond the most basic needs.

On the basis of the first three forms of alienation, Marx now goes on to argue for a fourth and final type. Individuals are not only alienated from themselves but also from others, hence, as he also says, from "human life" (B 129; III, 276), or a human life for human beings. Since in the process of production individuals relate to each other as expendable units and not as real human beings, there is a generalized estrangement in human relations in general.

Criticism of Hegel in the *Paris Manuscripts*

In the *Paris Manuscripts* the critique of Hegel culminates in the latter part of the third manuscript, where Marx considers the concept of dialectic in the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*, Hegel's two central books, and its relation to the young Hegelians. This unfinished passage is confusing, incompletely worked out, but very suggestive, although no amount of interpretation can make its tensions disappear. I will be simplifying somewhat to provide what is perhaps a more coherent interpretation than the text strictly warrants.

Marx, who begins with the young Hegelians, immediately notes three points (B 197; III, 328). First, philosophy is nothing more than religion in

the form of thought, hence merely another type of human alienation. In claiming that philosophy is a type of religion, Marx sides with Feuerbach against Hegel who, in the *Phenomenology*, draws a distinction between philosophy and religion in contending that religion is representational, whereas philosophy is conceptual. Second, Feuerbach has provided "*genuine materialism and positive science*" as the basic principle of the social relationship between people (B 197; III, 328). Left unclarified is what, if anything, "materialism" here and elsewhere in Marx's writings has to do with a claim about matter, hence how it differs, say, from any other science or even from philosophy. Third, Feuerbach has overcome the so-called negation of the negation, that is, Hegel's dialectic, through a self-grounding principle, or the relation between human beings mentioned in the second point.

If modern society can be understood as a series of social relationships, as Feuerbach contends, then Hegel's account of the historical process is at best no more than an abstract representation of it (B 198; III, 329). Marx illustrates this claim in regard to Hegel's *Phenomenology*, in which he discerns two basic errors. On the one hand, Hegel typically considers a variety of topics (e.g., wealth, state power, and so on) abstractly, or on the level of mind. This leads, in his later writings, to a philosophically uncritical attitude toward the way the world is. Second, and as a result, he transforms what is in fact the result of human action into the "product of abstract mind" or again mere "entities of thought" (B 202; III, 332).

In essence, then, philosophy, or at least Hegel's philosophy, features an abstract, unsatisfactory approach, inadequate to its object, in this case human history, since it tends to distort concrete reality. Marx, who wants more than that, now provides an appreciative statement of Hegel's achievement in Feuerbachian terminology, making clear what he thinks Hegel has accomplished (B 202; III, 332–3). He focuses on Hegel's conception of the "dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle" of human history, an idea which he later elaborates as the basis of his own economic approach to modern industrial society within the context of human history. Through the dialectic of negativity, he claims that Hegel grasps the process of human self-production, the nature of work, and human being as a product of its work.

Following Feuerbach's distinction between people as species-being, or members of the human species, and species-powers, or capacities as human beings, Marx suggests that a person only becomes a human being in realizing his capacities, and that this realization in turn requires cooperation between human individuals. He sums up his argument about Hegel, in a tacit reference to the passage on the "System of needs" in the *Philosophy of Right*, in enumerating five points, which can be simply listed:

Hegel bases his analysis on modern political economy.

Hegel understands work as essential to human being.

Hegel understands only the positive but not the negative side of work.

A person comes to be in and through work; but Hegel, who by implication overlooks real human alienation, considers the historical process as mental only.

Hence Hegel's philosophy remains on the mental, or abstract, level.

In this series of summary remarks Marx concedes that Hegel does not ignore, but rather specifically takes into account contemporary political economy. But he charges his great predecessor with failing to criticize contemporary political economy. In Marx's opinion, he fails to see that it falls short with respect to the problem of the way and the extent to which individuals meet their needs in civil society. This failure motivates Marx's claim that, despite his attention to political economy, Hegel's discussion remains abstract.

Marx develops the latter assertion in remarks on the account of absolute knowing in the last chapter of the *Phenomenology*. This treatise provides a theory of knowledge culminating in knowledge in the full, or absolute, sense. Absolute knowing (*absolutes Wissen*), which Hegel describes in a chapter written hastily in order to protect a financial guarantee that the book would appear in timely fashion, is not easy to interpret.⁵³ Suffice it to say that Hegel's conception of knowledge is intended to correct Kant's theoretical, *a priori* view of pure reason, which is unrelated to context. In its place, Hegel offers a practical, *a posteriori* view of "impure" reason, dependent on its context. In the critical philosophy, Kant strives to formulate the general conditions of experience and knowledge for all rational beings, including human beings. He depicts the problem of knowledge as a problem of consciousness of experienced objects. Hegel suggests that consciousness of an object is insufficient for knowledge, since we also need to be conscious of that consciousness, or self-conscious. In the *Phenomenology* he describes the real conditions of self-consciousness as an integral dimension of the knowing process.

In elaborating his critique of Hegel, Marx redescribes self-consciousness, for Hegel a condition of knowledge, as if it were Hegel's definition of the essence of a human being. In developing his critique, he transposes his concern with the problem of meeting one's needs in a social context, which Hegel treats in the *Philosophy of Right*, to the *Phenomenology*. Marx begins by repeating his claim that, since a person is self-consciousness, the object is merely objectified self-consciousness. From this perspective, real human alienation

is neither more nor less than the alienation of self-consciousness. Marx, who holds that this is what Hegel's *Phenomenology* ultimately comes to, drives his point home in an eight-point reconstruction of Hegel's work. We need not follow him in detail other than to note that, for Marx, Hegel reduces real objects to forms of self-consciousness, or "mere construct[s]" (B 206; III, 335).

Marx's critique, which is based on an understanding of Hegel's view of human being as contemplative, implies a different conception of human being, which he provides in following Fichte's important *Wissenschaftslehre* (*Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, 1794).⁵⁴ The turn to Fichte is not surprising. Feuerbach, whose influence is pervasive in Marx's early writings, was himself influenced by Fichte. For Marx as for Fichte, as a natural being, a person has capacities and drives, and meets its needs through external objects. Criticizing Hegel, Marx contends that a so-called non-objective being, or mere object of thought, is a "non-being" (B 207; III, 337). Continuing his exposition, Marx turns to Feuerbach, whose view is continuous with Fichte's, in suggesting that a person is a human natural being, hence a being for itself, or species-being. Yet it is unclear that this view of human beings is basically different from the view Marx himself attributes to Hegel. For he acknowledges that Hegel is correct to understand man as self-creating through labor.

After this passage on human being, Marx returns to Hegel in another formulation of his basic objection. In writing (possibly in reference to the *Phenomenology*) that existence depends on knowing, he calls attention to a double error. On the one hand, the object is reduced to thought; and on the other, people merely realize themselves in the spiritual world, as Feuerbach says, on the level of religion or theology. This objection rests, I think, on Marx's failure to see the difference between religion, whose cognitive limits Hegel criticizes, and the latter's insistence on the cognitive importance of the social framework, or spirit. Marx here follows Feuerbach's right-wing, basically religious reading of Hegel in contending that Hegel proposes no more than a false solution to a real problem. But he breaks new ground in suggesting that Hegel's analyses of law, morality, religion, and so on reduce real human beings to a mere abstract concept. According to Marx, private property is only apparently superseded in morality.

Marx sums up his analysis in claiming that Hegel offers an intellectual but not a real overcoming of human alienation through his abstract conception of human being. In more familiar terms, this amounts to solving the problem in theory but not in practice. Hegel errs in understanding the process of historical development through such synonymous terms as "God," "the absolute idea," and so on, which reduce the real subject, men and women, to a

mere predicate of a mystical subject. Hegel's writings exhibit no more than a logical, abstract, but unsuccessful approach to the real world.

Marxian Humanism, Philosophy, and Political Economy

The themes of humanism on the one hand and the relation of philosophy and political economy on the other are interrelated in Marx's position. His early writings, especially the *Paris Manuscripts*, are often associated with a conception of humanism very different from the political excesses of Marxism in power, so ably denounced by the Russian novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn among many others.⁵⁵ An interest in Marxian humanism, often confused with the intrinsic or lack of humanism of Marxist political practice, quickly led to widespread interest in Marx and Marxism after the publication of the *Paris Manuscripts*. With respect to Marxism, the term "humanism" generally refers to a critique of orthodox, rigid Marxism in power, most often by young intellectuals,⁵⁶ as well as the concern to formulate a specifically Marxist concept of the human individual.⁵⁷ In Marx, "humanism" refers to his anthropological conception of human being as the basis of an understanding of modern society.

Humanism, as distinguished from humanitarianism, or the love of humanity in general already fostered in Roman times by Marcus Tullius Cicero (103–43 BCE) and Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 BCE), has been understood in many different ways. Three kinds of humanism can be distinguished, including the revival of the study of the ancient classics (*studia humanitatis*) which began in Europe in fourteenth-century Italy, the formulation of a philosophy recognizing the value and dignity of man, and a claim for the social relevance of a given intellectual pursuit or philosophy.

The revival of classical letters is emphasized by the French writer François Rabelais (1494–1553) in *Pantagruel* (1532), which stresses the restoration of humanistic studies, the importance of learning the ancient languages (especially Greek), the role of the art of printing, and so on. Understood as the concern with human being, humanism studies such themes as freedom, naturalism, historical perspective, religion, and science. Philosophical concern with humanism ranges widely from early modern figures like Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) and Ludovico Vives (1492–1540), through such British empiricists as Francis Bacon (1561–1626), John Locke (1632–1714), George Berkeley (1685–1753), and David Hume (1711–76), all of whom base their views of knowledge on conceptions of the human

individual, to post-Kantian German philosophers like Fichte, Hegel, and Feuerbach.

Kant depicts the subject of knowledge, in his technical language the original transcendental unity of apperception, as a mere concept basically different from a human being. Fichte and then Hegel rethink the problem of knowledge in terms of real human beings. Feuerbach deepens the turn in philosophy after Kant to philosophical anthropology, or the basing of philosophy on a theory of the human person. Feuerbach typically stresses that reason is human reason, and that all knowledge is human knowledge⁵⁸ in arguing for anthropology as the universal science.⁵⁹

Marx, who was personally interested in the classics, was not concerned with their revival. His position is humanist in the second and third senses. It is humanist in the second sense, since his conception of human beings, in a word his commitment to philosophical anthropology, underlies and makes possible his view of political economy, hence his view of modern industrial society; and it is humanist in the third sense, since he is not concerned to break with, but rather to realize, philosophy understood in Hegel's sense as related to the realization of human freedom.

Following standard political economy, Marx develops his theory through a categorial analysis of labor, capital, and land. Specifically following Smith, Marx contends that work, or labor, is the central category of modern political economy. With the aid of the categories of work and private property, all other relevant categories can be developed. Now capitalism depends on the institution of private property, or the private ownership of the means of production, whose essence is work. In other words, in Marx's perspective the human being in his quality as a worker is the final source of private property, which is the objective consequence of work.

The source of this view lies in an understanding of human beings as meeting their needs through their work within the framework of modern industrial society. Marx features a revised form of the Hegelian conception of civil society. Unlike Hegel, who considers private property, the defining characteristic of capitalism, as abstract right within the specifically legal context, Marx, who returns beyond Hegel to modern political economy, comprehends private property in the economic structure of modern society.

Since private property is the objective counterpart to subjective human activity, Marx's approach to capitalism within modern society, and to modern society, depends on a prior theory of human beings as basically active beings. Following Hegel, although the view is already in such orthodox political economists as Smith, Marx presents a conception of human beings as basically active in meeting their needs within a social context, above all

in civil society whose nature and very existence depend on private property.

The nature of Marx's position needs to be understood from his interpretation and critique of Hegel's. Influenced by Feuerbach, Marx persistently objects to Hegel's substitution of a supposedly fictitious subject for human beings as the real subjects of history. Feuerbach's right-wing, theological reading of Hegel significantly distorts the latter's position. Fichte, who influenced Hegel, corrects Kant in rethinking the real subject of knowledge as a human being, an idea which is enormously developed in Hegel. Hegel is closer to the Feuerbachian position than either its author or Marx realized. His suggestion in the *Phenomenology* that religion is essentially a human phenomenon effectively anticipates Feuerbach's main thesis.⁶⁰

Marx differs from, but builds on, Hegel in developing the post-Kantian view of the subject as human beings acting within a social context. More than Hegel, more than anyone else, Marx is a philosopher of modern industrial society. His view is securely linked to the analysis of a particular but transient stage of society, that is transient according to Marx, for whom private property is no more than a stage in the development of human society.

Marx advances both a theory of modern industrial society, or capitalism, and a theory of the conditions of the development of human beings as individuals. In simple terms, he holds that, through their activity, people produce products for sale in the marketplace; capitalism, or a series of social relations between people who are united but also separated within the institution of private property; and themselves as workers and others as capitalists. His view depends on a distinction between types of human activity, kinds of need, and stages in the development of society. He contends that people are relegated to unfulfilling tasks in modern society where they can at best meet their basic needs, but not develop their individual, or specifically human capacities. He further contends they will be able to do so in communism, in which human activity will go beyond mere work in what, for lack of a better term, we can call free human activity.

Beginning in Kant, German philosophy develops forms of idealism in the positions of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It is often said that Marx's view is "materialism." Marxism, which makes this claim in Marx's name, routinely defines itself in terms of materialism, where materialism and idealism are understood as contraries which cannot both be true. In our own time, analytic philosophy is often similarly defined by its rejection of idealism. "Idealism" means different things to different observers. There is probably no way to use the term which is adequate to describe such different figures as Plato, perhaps Descartes and Leibniz, certainly Berkeley, the German idealists, and

the British idealists. In analytic philosophy, "idealism" concerns a supposed doubt about the existence of the external world, allegedly professed by the Irish philosopher George Berkeley. It was widely suspected that such British idealists as F. H. Bradley (1846–1924) also bought into this view. This suspicion led to a wholesale rejection of idealism by a long line of analytic writers throughout the twentieth century (e.g., G. E. Moore (1873–1958), Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), and so on). Another, very different concept of idealism originates with Kant. It lies in the claim (to which we will return below) that a condition of knowledge is that we in some sense produce, or construct, what we know. If we understand "idealism" as referring to the idea that the subject in some sense produces its world and itself, then Marx is clearly an idealist. There is no evidence that Marx's position depends on any specific claim about matter. If we accepted the interpretation of his position as materialism, then his so-called materialism would not be incompatible with, but merely a further form of, German idealism.

Notes

- 1 In recounting details from Marx's life, I will be relying on the abundant secondary literature, especially the excellent book by Maximilien Rubel and Margaret Manale, *Marx Without Myth: A Chronological Survey of His Life and Work*, New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- 2 See, for example, V. I. Lenin, *The Teachings of Karl Marx*, New York: International Publishers, 1930, p. 10.
- 3 See Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, trans. T. B. Bottomore, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
- 4 See Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx–Engels Reader*, New York: Norton, 1972.
- 5 See Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 178.
- 6 Lukács, who provides the most detailed orthodox Marxist treatment of the genesis of Marx's early thought from 1840 to 1844, typically maintains that Marx's position really begins in his effort to appropriate Hegel, an effort which is constantly directed to uncovering and resolving the contradiction in the latter's thought. See Georg Lukács, *Der junge Marx: seine philosophische Entwicklung von 1840–1844*, Pfullingen: Neske, 1965, pp. 7, 9.
- 7 See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977.
- 8 See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner Pluhar,

- Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996, A 127, p. 172.
- 9 See *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* in Immanuel Kant, *Philosophy of Material Nature*, trans. James W. Ellington, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1985.
 - 10 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.
 - 11 See "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature," in Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, New York: International Publishers, 1975, vol. 1, p. 38.
 - 12 See *ibid.*, p. 45.
 - 13 See *ibid.*, p. 73.
 - 14 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, §202, p. 123.
 - 15 "Difference," in *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 73.
 - 16 See letter of September 2, 1841 from Hess to the novelist Berthold Auerbach: "the greatest, perhaps the only real philosopher living today . . . Dr Marx . . . is still a very young man and is going to give the death blow to medieval religion and politics. He combines the sharpest wit with the most profound philosophical gravity; imagine Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel united in one person – and I mean united, not thrown together – there you have Dr Marx." Cited in Rubel and Manale, *Marx Without Myth*, p. 21.
 - 17 Stepelevich assigns the authorship to Bauer. See Bruno Bauer, *The Trumpet of the Last Judgment*, trans. Lawrence Stepelevich, New York: Mellen Press, 1989. For further discussion of Marx's and Bauer's possible collaboration on this and other texts, see Zvi Rosen, *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977, pp. 129–30.
 - 18 See Karl Marx, "Noch ein Wort über: Bruno Bauer and die akademische Lehrfreiheit von Dr. O. F. Gruppe. Berlin 1842," in MEW, *Ergänzungsband*, pp. 381–4; "Yet Another Word on Bruno Bauer and die Akademische Lehrfreiheit by Dr. O. F. Gruppe," in CW vol. 1, pp. 211–14.
 - 19 "Bemerkungen über die Preussische Zensurinstruktion," in MEW vol. 1, p. 25; "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction," in CW vol. 1, pp. 109–31.
 - 20 See "Debatten über die Preßfreiheit und Publikation der Landständischen Verhandlungen," in MEW I, p. 51; and "Proceedings of the Sixth Rhine Province Assembly. Debates on Freedom of the Press and Publication of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the Estates," in CW vol. 1.
 - 21 See "Debatten über die Preßfreiheit und Publikation der Landständischen Verhandlungen," in MEW vol. 1, p. 61.
 - 22 See Rubel and Manale, *Marx Without Myth*, p. 47.
 - 23 See his letter to Arnold Ruge, dated March 5, 1842, in CW vol. 1, p. 382.
 - 24 See Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot, New York: Harper and Row, 1957.
 - 25 See Sigmund Freud, "The Future of an Illusion," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay, New York: Norton, 1989, pp. 685–721.

- 26 Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Manfred Vogel, Indianapolis, IN: LLA, 1966.
- 27 See *ibid.*, §§19, 20, p. 31.
- 28 See "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," in CW vol. 3, p. 5. Further references to this work will be in parentheses in the text.
- 29 "Proceeding from the Hegelian philosophy of law, Marx came to the conclusion that it was not the state, which Hegel had described as the 'top of the edifice,' but 'civil society,' which Hegel had regarded with disdain, that was the sphere in which a key to the understanding of the process of the historical development of mankind should be looked for." Frederick Engels, "Marx," in CW, pp. 60–1.
- 30 This critique is frequently raised in Marxism to differentiate Marx from Hegel on the grounds that Hegel's conception of the historical subject is finally theological, hence fictitious. See, for example, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971, pp. 83–222.
- 31 *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, §189, p. 126.
- 32 It is possible that Marx's feelings about Jews derive from his conversion to Protestantism. Anti-Semitic passages are scattered throughout his writings. Examples include a reference to Jews who live in the pores of medieval society in *Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy* (CW vol. 28, p. 411); a reference to Lassalle as a Jewish nigger in letter of July 30, 1862; a reference to Jews in the pores of Polish society in *Capital* vol. 1, (CW vol. 35, p. 90); reference to money as inwardly circumcised Jews in *Capital* vol. 1 (CW 35, p. 165), which is an allusion to Romans 2: 29; an allusion to a Jew who sells a farthing for a guinea in *Capital* vol. 1 (CW 35, p. 173), and so on.
- 33 For further discussion of Bauer's view, see *The Holy Family*, ch. 6, part b.
- 34 This distinction became the basis of the form of neo-Marxism known as the Frankfurt School. See "Traditional and Critical Theory," in Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell and others, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972, pp. 188–243.
- 35 See, for example, Erich Fromm, ed., *Socialist Humanism*, Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1966.
- 36 See Frederick Engels, "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy," in CW vol. 3, pp. 418–43.
- 37 It is important to note that Engels here understands contradiction in a Kantian sense as a conceptual confusion about a certain topic, not in a Hegelian sense, as a contradiction immanent in the phenomena, in Marx's theory as a contradiction internal to capitalism.
- 38 See CW vol. 3, pp. 79, 100, and so on.
- 39 See Marx, *Early Writings*, pp. 19, 39.
- 40 For discussion, see Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; and Istvan Meszaros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation*, London: Merlin, 1970.

- 41 See Richard Schacht, *Alienation*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971.
- 42 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, ed. Lester G. Crocker, New York: Washington Square Press, 1971, p. 7.
- 43 See J. G. Fichte, *The Science of Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp. 233–4: “this alien element stands necessarily in conflict with the self’s endeavor to be absolutely identical.”
- 44 See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §36, p. 21.
- 45 See *ibid.*, §755, p. 457.
- 46 For the discussion of master and slave, see *ibid.*, §§178–96, pp. 111–19.
- 47 See *ibid.*
- 48 See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §§ 65–71, pp. 52–7.
- 49 See *The Second Treatise of Government*, in John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, New York: Mentor, 1965, § 32, pp. 332–3.
- 50 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, § 65, p. 52.
- 51 *Ibid.*, § 67, p. 54.
- 52 Lukács, who insightfully “rediscovered” Marx’s view of alienation by reading his later writings before the *Paris Manuscripts* were published, unfortunately conflates alienation and objectification. See Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*.
- 53 See “Absolute Knowing,” in Tom Rockmore, *Cognition: An Introduction to Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 179–94.
- 54 See Tom Rockmore, *Fichte, Marx and the German Philosophical Tradition*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980.
- 55 See A. Solzhenitsyn, *Archipelago Gulag*, 2 vols., New York: Harper and Row, 1975.
- 56 See, for example, Leszek Kolakowski, *Toward a Marxist Humanism: Essays on the Left Today*, trans. Jane Zielenko Peel, New York: Grove Press, 1968.
- 57 See, for example, Adam Schaff, *Marxism and the Human Individual*, trans. Olgierd Wojtasiewicz, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.
- 58 See Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, § 50, pp. 66–7.
- 59 *Ibid.*, § 54, p. 70.
- 60 See Hegel, *Phenomenology*, §209, p. 127.

3

Marx's Transitional Writings

When, for contingent reasons, Marx was forced to leave Paris, he continued to write, and a small flood of texts flowed from his pen. Division of the development of a position into different stages is always arbitrary. For present purposes, we can assume that Marx's transitional writings include those co-authored with Engels, as well as many other texts authored only by Marx, often with an increasingly economic flavor, but still plainly philosophical in tone, running at least through the *Grundrisse*.

"Theses on Feuerbach"

Marx had been in Paris since late 1843. As a result of the pressure of the Prussian government on its citizens in France, in January 1845 Marx and other politically active Germans were forced either to cease their political activity or to leave the country. Marx chose to leave Paris for Brussels. He was to remain in Brussels, except for very brief intervals in Paris and Germany, for a little more than three years, from February 1845 to March 1848. Shortly after Marx went to Brussels, Engels also moved there to continue their joint work. Important writings during this period include *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique*, a long book to which Engels only contributed about a dozen pages; *The German Ideology*, which was jointly composed but not published during their lifetimes; Marx's study of Proudhon; and the famous "Communist Manifesto," for which Marx alone composed the final version, a text which is part scientific analysis, and part call to revolutionary action.

Marx's writing during this period of intense collaboration was, like most of Engels's own writing, early and late, sharply polemical. *The Holy Family*, which was written in late 1844 and published in early 1845, is the first book jointly composed by Marx and Engels. Here they criticize a number of their

young Hegelian contemporaries, above all Bruno Bauer, Marx's former colleague on the *Rheinische Zeitung*. The book contains much arid polemic directed against Bauer and other left-wing Hegelians. When he is at his best, Marx is an insightful writer, attentive and quick to respond to various nuances in the authors he considers, and capable of brilliant insight. This book, on the contrary, is almost wholly polemical, mainly a collection of simplistic views, lacking the nuances of previous and later Marxian writings, quicker to denounce than to comprehend, full of sharp oppositions. An example among many is the claim in the first sentence of the foreword that there is no more dangerous enemy of real humanism, already discussed in the *Paris Manuscripts*, than spiritualism or speculative idealism (IV, 7). Another example is the equally simplistic attack, often cited, on Szeliga, the pseudonym of Franz von Zychlin (1816–1900), a Prussian officer and young Hegelian. Hegel also comes in for ridicule for allegedly holding that contemplation of different types of fruit leads to the idea of fruit as an essence central to real things (IV, 57–8).

Yet with all its many flaws, this same book is also important for the further development of themes broached earlier in the *Paris Manuscripts*, including alienation and Marx's own view of socialism. A link is clearly drawn here between the need for the emerging proletarian class to break the bonds of capitalism discussed in "Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction," the tendency of capitalism to be unstable, and the analysis of alienation in the *Paris Manuscripts*. The institution of private property, which rests on a contradiction between the proletariat and money, leads to pressure to sublate, or do away with, private property, its very condition. Why? Because in a society based on private ownership of the means of production, everyone is alienated. In a passage on alienation formulated in Hegelian terminology, a quasi-Hegelian distinction is drawn between the workers' feeling of powerlessness, and the capitalists' feeling of power which creates in the latter only the false appearance (*Schein*) of a really human form of life (IV, 46–7). The concern with alienation will remain a constant theme in Marx's writings through *Capital*.

Besides their studies and writing, Marx and Engels were politically very active when Marx lived in Brussels. During this time, they jointly founded a Correspondence Committee, which later became a part of the Communist League, in order to mobilize workers for socialist goals. Marx even wrote to Proudhon, whom he had known well in Paris, asking for his collaboration on this project. Yet Marx, who was very mercurial, shortly thereafter attacked him unmercifully in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, a book written alone in early 1847 and published later in that year.

Even a brief account of Marx's position needs to comment on his famous "Theses on Feuerbach." They were written down by Marx in Brussels in 1845 and first published by Engels in a slightly revised form as an appendix to his little book on Feuerbach in 1888. Marx's own text did not appear as it was written until 1924, when it was published in Moscow. We will consider Marx's original text as opposed to Engels's emended version of it. Marx's text is short – very short by his expansive standards – a little more than two pages, and composed of eleven even shorter statements. Engels's claim that it contains "the brilliant germ of the new world outlook"¹ would put the origin of that view after the *Paris Manuscripts*. But the break, or discontinuity, in Marx's development, which this claim suggests, has never been demonstrated.

This text is important as a very compressed statement of aspects of Marx's position and for his effort, present but less evident in the *Paris Manuscripts*, to distance himself from Feuerbach, whose influence is clear in his writings up to this point. Feuerbach, who was never a careful writer, remarks in the *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* that the differences between materialism, empiricism, realism, and humanism are not significant.² In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx loosely follows Feuerbach. He indicates that communism is naturalism (B 155; III, 296). He further suggests that naturalism and humanism differ from and are the unifying truth of idealism and materialism (B 206; III, 336). Later, he affirms that theoretical humanism follows from the critique of religion, and practical humanism – which is communism – will follow from the sublation of private property (B 213; III, 341). At this point, Marx thinks of his view as humanism, or as the real humanism alluded to at the beginning of *The Holy Family*, in any case beyond either idealism or materialism. At the very least, this makes it difficult to attribute a consistent view of materialism to Marx, as Marxists often do. Materialism suddenly comes to the fore in the "Theses on Feuerbach," where Marx perhaps unfairly attributes a contemplative form of materialism to Feuerbach in order to criticize that position from the vantage point of the new materialism.

Here and in some later writings, for instance in *The German Ideology*, which he composed with Engels, Marx stresses materialism. Is this a change in terminology or a change in doctrine? Materialism derives from the view developed by Democritus and Lucretius, which Marx studied in his dissertation, according to which everything which exists is purely material. This ancient view has since been restated in many different ways, including the Marxist thesis mentioned above, and due to Engels, of the priority of matter over mind. Marx's discussion of materialism in this text has no obvious relation to this Marxist thesis.

Marx's remarks here are consistent with his earlier writings. They include

the criticism of Hegel for allegedly providing a mystical theory of history. They further include the critique of political economy for neglecting the consequences on human beings of the economic conditions of life. This amounts to simply overlooking the problem of the long-term stability of modern industrial society. The type of materialism which Marx now recommends starts, as he claims to start in the *Paris Manuscripts*, from the real, as opposed to the theoretically imagined, state of the case.

Marx's remarks concern the difference between a theoretical stance and making a practical difference. The latter depends on being attentive to and rooted in the real world. As he has all along in his writings, Marx stresses his concern to make a real difference in concentrating not on mere theory but on practice (*Praxis*).

Since this text has been widely and extensively studied, and since it is relatively accessible, it can be discussed very briefly here. Two specific theses should be mentioned. There is a (scholarly) controversy concerning the sixth thesis, which criticizes Feuerbach's conception of human being and raises questions about the continuity of Marx's position.³ Marx objects that in his view of religion Feuerbach "resolves the religious essence into the *human* essence," which is not an abstraction in each person, but rather "the ensemble of social relations" (GI 122; V, 4). This objection, which raises questions about the evolution of Marx's relation to Feuerbach and his own view of essentialism,⁴ points toward a theory of human individuality in which nurture wholly displaces nature.⁵ A view of this kind is widely adopted in Marxism.⁶ Whether or not Marx holds this or a similar view, the view itself is difficult to defend. It seems unrealistic to think that genetic heritage plays no part at all in what people become. A better theory would combine both nature and nurture, not to suppress nature in favor of nurture.

This text culminates in the eleventh and last thesis, where Marx reaffirms the point he has been suggesting all along, namely that his is an activist philosophy committed to altering the status quo in the direction of the freedom of the men and women of the world oppressed by liberal capitalism. In a famous remark, which justly picks out the passive stance of most philosophers, who, if not actually indifferent to others, are content to stand on the sidelines of history without intervening, Marx writes: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it" (GI 123; V, 5).

The German Ideology

The book with the awkward title *The German Ideology. Critique of Modern German Philosophy According to Its Representatives Feuerbach, B. Bauer and Stirner, and of German Socialism According to Its Various Prophets* was jointly composed by Marx and Engels from spring 1845 to summer 1846 in Brussels, but it was only published as a whole for the first time in Moscow in 1932.⁷ After Hermann Leske, the publisher in Darmstadt, cancelled the signed contract, Marx and Engels were unable to find another publisher. As Marx later reported, they abandoned the manuscript to “the gnawing critique of the mice” (XXIX, 264). It should be stressed again that, like the *Paris Manuscripts* and the *Grundrisse*, this work was not part of the original collection of writings available when Marxism took shape.

In comparison to *The Holy Family*, *The German Ideology* is a little calmer and a little less polemical, more historically oriented. In retrospect, one wonders why Marx, who thought that his young Hegelian contemporaries were mainly unimportant, found it necessary to rehearse that belief so often and at such length. Like Marx's (and particularly Engels's) other polemical works, this book contains long passages of arid criticism of contemporaries who, often unimportant when it was written, have since mainly been forgotten. Today this very lengthy study of almost 600 pages is important for two main reasons: the continued development of Marx's thought and the explicit account of the very important concept of ideology.

The German Ideology contains further critique of Bruno Bauer, a favorite conceptual whipping boy, a very detailed attack on Stirner, and critical discussion of the so-called prophets of German socialism (e.g., Karl Grün and Dr. Georg Kuhlmann). Max Stirner (pseud. Johann Caspar Schmidt, 1806–56), a young Hegelian, defended an extreme form of individualism. His main work, *The Ego and His Own* (*Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, 1845), shows strong traces of Fichte's influence and anticipates Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844–1900) conception of the superman in a study with anarchistic and nihilistic resonances. In the 1840s, Karl Grün (1817–87) adopted so-called true socialism. Georg Kuhlmann (1812–?), who represented himself as a prophet while preaching true socialism in Switzerland, was later unmasked as an agent of the Austrian government.

With the exception of some isolated flashes of insight, the most interesting passages in this work occur in the first part, which is devoted simultaneously to criticizing Feuerbach, to presenting a position common at the time to Marx and Engels, and to sketching a new view of ideology in the course of

criticizing German ideology. It is crucial to an understanding of Marx's position to reflect on the relation of this text to his previous writings. In discerning here the beginning of the new world view, Engels suggests a break between Marx's earlier and later texts in that a new, different theory, due to them both, is allegedly initially stated in this work.⁸ According to this thesis, which is a basic element of Marxism, there is a break between Marx's early and later writings following a break with philosophy.

This idea receives its most extensive elaboration in the writings of the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. The French philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962) introduced the idea of an epistemological break (*coupure épistémologique*) to explain fundamental scientific advances through a basic discontinuity between scientific epochs. Althusser applies this idea to Marx in distinguishing two supposedly discontinuous periods in his development: the early Marx, who remained a German philosopher; and the later Marx who, beginning with *The German Ideology*, broke with his previous position in formulating a theory of Marxist science incompatible with philosophy and left philosophy behind.⁹

At stake is whether there is continuity or discontinuity (as Engels and Althusser think)¹⁰ in the development of Marx's position. Engels's conviction that Marx's theory can be addressed as a world view¹¹ is routinely accepted by Marxists and non-Marxists alike.¹² This suggests that Marx's position is not philosophy. The argument for this claim is often waged by pointing to an alleged discontinuity between Marx's early writings and later writings. C. J. Arthur, a recent Marxist proponent of this thesis, inconsistently maintains two contradictory ideas. On the one hand, he holds that in this work Marx and Engels break with their contemporaries, but also with "their German philosophical past."¹³ On the other, he suggests that the basic idea of this work is that man produces himself through labor, an idea which he already finds in the *Paris Manuscripts* and later in *Capital*.¹⁴ Yet Marx here, together with Engels, further develops the basic ideas of the *Paris Manuscripts* while adding new ones. Since the latter text is philosophical, then so also is the *German Ideology*. The view of the self-production of human beings through labor does not break with the German philosophical past. It is a basic part of Hegel's position which, on this interpretation, would not be philosophy.

Beyond the further development of the philosophical position initially stated in the *Paris Manuscripts*, the main philosophical contribution of this work lies in a theory of ideology, based on Marx's conception of alienation. The term originates in the work of Antoine-Louis-Claude Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836), who was interested in a science of ideas.¹⁵ The concept of

ideology has since developed enormously.¹⁶ There are at present some 100 distinguishable views of ideology, many of which are incompatible. Work on the concept has led to the rise of such related disciplines as the sociology of knowledge.¹⁷

The main philosophical ideas appear in the relatively short first part of this work, entitled "Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks." Here the authors, who devote little explicit attention to Feuerbach, simultaneously sketch a theory of ideology while outlining in more detail what is often described as a materialist theory of history. In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx presents a thoroughly Hegelian view of human beings as producing the social world and themselves. Beginning with Kant, German philosophy turns on theories of consciousness and self-consciousness. For Kant, who understands the subject as a mere logical condition of knowledge, consciousness is autonomous, hence unrelated to time or place. Hegel, on the contrary, understands the subject as one or more real human beings, whose consciousness is not autonomous but dependent on the surrounding community. *The German Ideology* develops a variant of this approach in relating consciousness not to the community in general, but more narrowly to economic activity within the framework of civil society.

In the *Logic* Hegel draws a distinction between essence and appearance, which he further subdivides into true (*Erscheinung*) and false (*Schein*) forms. Ideology concerns taking false appearance as true description, something which Marx attributes to religion as its stock in trade in "Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction." Like Hegel, Marx and Engels in this work and Marx in other writings take an essentialist approach to truth. Ideology is a theory of the production of false consciousness tending to mislead observers about the nature of the social world.

In the preface, the authors make three claims: first, people constantly depend on false conceptions about themselves and their surroundings; second, these conceptions are the stock in trade of certain philosophers, such as the young Hegelians, who struggle mightily but only with shadows; and, third, the present work aims to debunk this tendency. Left unclear is whether this work is directed against the young Hegelians, as seems likely, or whether it is meant to discredit philosophy in general.

The first and second claims, that is that people misunderstand themselves, and that this misunderstanding is shared in certain philosophical quarters, depend on the theory of ideology which, in turn, further depends on a theory of modern industrial society already outlined in the *Paris Manuscripts*. In comparison to Marx's earlier writing, *The German Ideology* differs in the further development and refinement of the basic "productionist" model of capi-

talism as defined by the private ownership of the means of production. Unlike the *Paris Manuscripts* and almost all Marx's major texts up to and including *Capital*, there is little attention to specific economic views but detailed accounts of various historical phenomena. These include the stages in social development in terms of the changing nature of private property, division of labor, and so on. A further difference is that there is little direct discussion of Hegel, whose ideas, although occasionally criticized, lurk constantly in the background. The focus, rather, is squarely placed on the supposed limitations of the young Hegelians, Marx's erstwhile colleagues.

The discussion begins with the claim that the young Hegelians, who take themselves too seriously, have never gone beyond Hegel. The latter's system has never been seriously criticized, since criticism has so far been confined to religion (III, 28–9). Philosophers have so far simply failed to study the relation of German philosophy to German reality, understood as its material surroundings (III, 30).

Up to this point, the discussion is consistent with Marx's earlier criticism of Hegel for providing a misleading account of the nature of social reality. Hegel's critics, as Marx says about Feuerbach in the "Theses on Feuerbach," fail to break out of the folds of his position. They fail to criticize it adequately, since they fail even to raise the preliminary question of the relation of philosophy to social reality. We are meant to infer that philosophy needs to be understood as a social activity within a social context, precisely the idea that Hegel advances in the *Phenomenology*. After these critical remarks, the discussion divides into two parts, including a general theory of social reality and a more restricted theory of social consciousness. The former is sketched as a theory of modern industrial society from the economic perspective of production, the same perspective employed in the *Paris Manuscripts*. The latter is sketched as a special form of production, that is the production of our ideas about the world in which we live.

The theory of modern industrial society begins with an effort to describe human beings, who differ from animals in producing their means of subsistence (III, 31) through economic activity. By implication, alone among all living creatures people engage in and are defined by their economic activity carried out within civil society to meet their needs. There is a basic difference between philosophical discussion of life and life itself, which begins beyond speculation (III, 37). Human liberation cannot occur merely on the mental level, but must be carried out in real history (III, 38). Despite his critique of Hegel, Feuerbach does not grasp the historical character of the real world (III, 39), since he neglects history (III, 41). Real problems demand real solutions, and philosophical problems can be resolved empirically (III, 39). This

follows if and only if such problems are themselves empirical as Marx earlier thought in his "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction."

The view outlined so far presupposes a conception of the historical development of the economic context, which now emerges. The main move is an effort to explain history through economics. Since people are motivated in the first instance to meet their needs, history must be understood in terms of production and exchange, more precisely "the [economic] production of the means to satisfy these needs" (III, 42). The production process is both natural, since it responds to the requirements of human nature, and "social in the sense that it denotes the cooperation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end" (III, 43).

Like its predecessor in the *Paris Manuscripts* this stage of modern industrial society depends on a view of human beings. As in that text, the effect of different historical stages in the development of society on different individuals is brought out by correlating social stages with human development. Capitalism is characterized by the division of labor, which is functionally equivalent to private property, and which leads only to alienation. Communism, in principle, will lead to a social mobility which does not exist in modern industrial society. In capitalism individuals are obliged for strictly economic reasons to take on specific roles, whereas in communism one will be able to play many different roles without being forced into any one of them as an exclusive form of activity (III, 47). In recalling the earlier discussion of the proletariat in "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction," it is claimed that alienation can be overcome by creating a propertyless class which, through revolution (III, 48), will lead to a classless society (III, 52–3).

In drawing the conclusions of this sketch, Marx and Engels claim, as Marx had consistently claimed in his earlier criticism of Hegel, that in excluding human being from nature the real basis of history has been overlooked (III, 55). Hegel is supposedly guilty of this mistake in understanding history in terms of spirit (III, 55). Yet it is not clear what this objection amounts to. If it means that Hegel somehow overlooks the social world, then it simply overlooks Hegel's own discussion of concrete historical phenomena, including political economy.

Consideration of the historical development of society from the economic perspective now culminates in three specific claims. First, all collisions of history "originate in the contradictions between productive forces and forms of intercourse" (III, 74; see also 85–7), in other words in a disparity between the forces of production and the social organization of society. Second, his-

tory is nothing more or other than the record of the development of these forces (III, 82). Third, in the final analysis, productive forces do not depend on individuals but on private property, the institution which defines capitalism (III, 86–7).

Marx and Engels have so far sketched the nature of modern industrial society as a locus to meet human needs through human activity within the economic process which unfolds in civil society. Although it is considerably sharpened here, the basic theory, including many of its main aspects, has already been encountered in Marx's previous writings. In comparison, Marx and Engels innovate sharply in applying this same model of production, the basis of the model of modern industrial society, to the problem of false consciousness in a theory of ideology.

Consciousness is a central theme in German philosophy. Kant's theory of knowledge elaborates a very general account of the conditions of consciousness and knowledge of objects of experience. The theory of ideology does not contradict but rather extends Hegel's view. In a justly famous passage in the *Phenomenology* on the relation of masters and slaves,¹⁸ already mentioned several times, and which has often been taken as a metaphor for modern industrial society, Hegel considers the real conditions of consciousness and self-consciousness. Marx and Engels are not interested in consciousness but false consciousness, or ideology. If philosophy needs to be understood against the background of the social context, and if German philosophy generally purveys a false or misleading image of that context, then its false nature needs to be explained. The theory of ideology explains false consciousness as a by-product or consequence of the socially distorted organization of modern society.

The theory of ideology, which is less elaborated in *The German Ideology* than sketched, less argued than asserted, remains in fragmentary form. It begins in a limited analogy between ideas and commodities. Our ideas are products which, unlike commodities, in the first instance are directly linked to material activity (III, 36). This implies that, like the products we produce, the very type of ideas we have depends on the kind of society in which we live. It further suggests that, under certain conditions, ideas can be separated from the conditions under which they are produced. Although some ideas are alienated, or false, because of their relation to the social conditions in which they arise, it is not the case that all ideas are false. This is important since the simpler claim that all ideas are false would be self-referentially inconsistent.

The claim that ideas are false because of their relation to the social context is based on an extension of the model of production underlying Marx's theory

of alienation. We recall that in the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx argues that private ownership of the means of production leads to alienation of the product and the worker. This argument is now extended through the suggestion that as a further result ideas are also alienated. This further claim rests on two theses. On the one hand, ideas are determined by the society in which they arise. This determination is neither universal nor inflexible, but true only in the first instance. This restriction makes it possible to maintain that some but not all ideas are determined by the relation to the social context. On the other hand, ideological ideas are further determined as false expressions of the social context which they fail to capture. For ideology provides an inverted image in the same way as an image is inverted in a camera obscura or on the retina (III, 36).

Extending the metaphor of inversion, Marx and Engels now oppose ideological and non-ideological approaches to an understanding of our world and ourselves. The former approach, widely current in German philosophy, consists in descending from heaven, or mere abstractions, to earth, or empirical reality. The new, correct approach lies in ascending from earth, or the concrete situation and actions of concrete human beings, to heaven (III, 36).

The reasoning behind the recommended approach lies in an appreciation of the relation of consciousness to life. It is false to think that consciousness determines life from which it emerges and by which, as a product, it is determined, since on the contrary "consciousness is determined by life" (III, 37). To see consciousness as autonomous is to think that our surroundings and ourselves can be understood from an abstract perspective situated outside of the social context, although the proper approach must take the social context into account. But all forms of materialism are not equal. Feuerbach, who allegedly neglects the historical dimension, presents no more than an ideological analysis of the world in which we live (III, 41).

The more general point is that consciousness is a social product (III, 44), hence always impure. It is never pure, since it is never wholly disconnected from the social context in which it arises; and it is only falsely represented as pure by philosophers like Kant, the author of the famous *Critique of Pure Reason*. This suggests a basic opposition between idealism and what is now described as materialism. The former incorrectly explains practice from ideas. The correct approach is to explain ideas, in such domains as morality, religion, or philosophy from practice (III, 54).

The doctrine of ideology is important, not only theoretically to correct views of how ideas relate to the surroundings in which they arise, but also practically. Ideas cannot be evaluated in isolation, without considering their back-

ground, since, as Marx and Engels claim, not only the type of society but even the ideas of the ruling class are always the ruling ideas (III, 59). Ideology, or false consciousness, is more than a mere failure to comprehend the true nature of the social world. It plays an important role in establishing and maintaining the dominance of the owners of the means of production over everyone else through the medium of false images of the social world and themselves.

The Poverty of Philosophy

The economic emphasis in Marx, which begins prior to the *Paris Manuscripts* and reaches a new level there, steadily increases in *The German Ideology* and subsequent writings. Engels and others contend that *The German Ideology* breaks with Marx's earlier writings in presenting a new world view. But it has been shown that this text continues while further developing a general theory of modern industrial society already sketched in the *Paris Manuscripts*. The gradual development of this theory continues further in Marx's attack on Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

This book airs in a public forum the private quarrels which opposed Proudhon and Marx during the latter's stay in Paris. As Marx's own views took shape, their difference from Proudhon's became more acute. Marx and Engels had already mentioned Proudhon in *The Holy Family*. In a section authored by Marx, Proudhon is respectfully described as writing not only in the interest but also as a member of the proletariat (IV, 41). His work on property is characterized as a contribution of the French proletariat (IV, 41). But he is criticized for his supposed concern to resolve the problem of economic alienation within the context of contemporary economic liberalism (IV, 43), by inference in virtue of his opposition to communism.

Proudhon's *System of Economic Contradictions or Philosophy of Poverty*¹⁹ appeared in December 1846 when Marx was living in Brussels. When his book appeared in 1846, Proudhon was 37 years old and in the process of becoming the leading French theoretician of radical politics. Marx, who was 29, and had been academically trained before turning to radical politics, was already deeply steeped in economic theories which, he believed, Proudhon did not really understand. Never slow to respond, Marx fired off a letter to P. V. Annenkov (1812–87), a Russian landowner and liberal critic, whom he had met in Brussels in 1846.²⁰ The contents of this letter, in which Marx criticized Proudhon, quickly grew into Marx's public critique of his former friend's book.

Despite some influence of Proudhon on Marx, these two texts reflect the difference, in fact the radical opposition, between the two authors: Proudhon, a largely self-taught French anti-communist, committed to anarchism, opposed to authority; and the pro-communist Marx, professionally trained as a German philosopher. Proudhon, the son of a peasant, financed his education by working as a printer before winning a scholarship to study in Paris. In Paris, he became friendly with Marx, by whom he was influenced and with whom he later broke. He also became friendly with Bakunin, the Russian anarchist, and with Alexander Herzen (1812–70), the important Russian writer, both of whom later became his disciples. Proudhon attacked the communist thinkers of his time, although he opposed private property based on the exploitation of others. He is known as the founding father of anarchism, a political doctrine advocating the abolition of political control by some people over others.²¹

Proudhon was interesting to Marx in that he offered a very different analysis of modern industrial society. Like Marx, he was self-taught in economics. He shared Marx's view that the proper approach to modern society runs through political economy. Proudhon preached a view of revolutionary action leading to social reform. His view was sharply opposed to Marx's view of revolutionary action as leading to communism understood as differing not in degree but in kind from capitalism.

It will be helpful, in order to understand Marx's response to Proudhon, to summarize some aspects of the latter's diffuse discussion. In the first chapter of *System of Economic Contradictions or Philosophy of Poverty*, after distinguishing the usual economic routine, or political economy, and socialism, or utopia, he argues for their reconciliation. The task at hand is to utilize use-value to advance human well-being and liberty (51).²² The normal progression of economic development runs through two stages, including the appropriation of the world and its natural values, then the association and distribution through work until the achievement of complete equality (52). This equality is impeded or prevented by the intrinsic antagonism between two forms of value – use-value, or what a product is useful for, and exchange value, or how much it will bring in the marketplace – which are in constant opposition (58). Property is intrinsically contradictory, including the right of inclusion and exclusion, the price and the negation of work, a spontaneous social product and the dissolution of society, the institution of justice and theft (213).

The principle that all work must leave a surplus means that property is only acquired through theft from others (78). The error of contemporary socialism is to perpetuate religious reveries leading to utopianism, whereas

the real secret lies in political economy (86). The problem is that work leads not to riches for the worker but to its own negation (91). Poverty, which is the result of work (97), is only increased by the introduction of machines through the industrial revolution (112). Until now various forms of socialism have only been utopian (133). The solution is to make capital depend on the people and not conversely (180).

Proudhon presciently opposed communism on the grounds that it will not resolve, but merely reproduce, the contradictions of political economy in substituting the collective individual for the individual (259). He argued that communists, who are deeply inclined toward dictatorship (287), do not so much think as simply believe (288). The real solution lies neither in perpetuating the status quo nor in utopianism, but rather in “a law of *exchange*, a theory of MUTUALITY” as Proudhon obscurely claims. He calls for

a system of guarantees which resolves the old forms of civil and commercial societies, and which satisfies all the conditions of efficiency, progress and justice indicated by criticism, a society which is not only ordinary but real, which transforms parcellary division into an instrument of science, which abolishes slavery of machines and anticipates the crises of their appearance, which transforms competition into a profit and monopoly into a guarantee for everyone. (304–5)

Proudhon indicates that philosophy and political economy cannot be separated, since political economy is philosophy (208). The idea that Marx's book is important only as the anticipation of his later critique of political economy rests on the mistaken apprehension that the response to his French colleague only anticipates the dialectical and critical theory he will later develop. On the contrary, the main lines of that theory have already been in place as early as the *Paris Manuscripts*. Proudhon's book had scarcely appeared when Marx began to respond in very good French in a book which appeared in 1847.

With the exceptions of Hegel and Ricardo, Marx generally found it difficult to respect those with whom he disagreed. The slightly more respectful tone Marx took in discussing Proudhon earlier in *The Holy Family* here gives way to a confrontational, biting, often ironic treatment of his French socialist colleague. Marx's answer to Proudhon is provided in *The Poverty of Philosophy. Answer to the Philosophy of Poverty by M. Proudhon*. Although largely polemical, this work is also important, not least because it is Marx's first book ostensibly directed solely to political economy. In the short foreword, Marx, who here styles himself a German economist, indicates that his discussion will not be confined to Proudhon, but will address German philosophy and

political economy. This is a clear indication, if one is necessary, that the chance to comment on Proudhon, a relatively minor figure, is at best a pretext for Marx. It is rather an occasion to continue his effort to come to grips with philosophy and political economy as the two main influences on his effort to comprehend and transform modern industrial society.

This very short work, scarcely more than a hundred pages, is divided into two chapters respectively concerning the concept of value and the metaphysics of political economy. The shorter first chapter, entitled "A Scientific Discovery," discusses Proudhon's grasp of economic value. This topic will continue to occupy Marx as late as *Capital*. As he earlier did with Hegel, Marx here cites, and comments upon, passages drawn from Proudhon's book and from a wide range of political economists.

A few indications will suffice to indicate Marx's view of Proudhon's acquaintance with contemporary economic theory. In reviewing a passage about supply, Marx observes that Proudhon has forgotten demand (VI, 115). After rehearsing Ricardo's influential theory of rent, he notes the relation between Ricardo's scientific interpretation of real economic life and Proudhon's utopian reinterpretation of it (VI, 124). According to Marx, the supposedly egalitarian consequences Proudhon deduces from Ricardo's theory rest on a basic confusion between two different ways of measuring the value of commodities (VI, 127). Recalling his economic approach to history, Marx claims against Proudhon that civilization is itself based on intrinsic contradictions, or "antagonisms" (VI, 132). In a future society – the allusion is to communism – the absence of classes will do away with class struggle in favor of production no longer based on the time required but rather on social utility (VI, 134). Yet Marx is realistic in noting that in present society the free market, which results in social misery, also results in progress (VI, 137). In calling attention to the philosophical underpinning of his analysis, Marx suggests that in the market it is not a product or products but rather labor which is exchanged (VI, 143). Money is not a thing but a social relation (VI, 145). Rather than surpassing capitalism, Proudhon's mythical analysis leads merely to a system of social relations based on the antagonism between different classes (VI, 159).

In the longer second chapter Marx turns to the "Metaphysics of Political Economy" to elucidate contradictions in Proudhon's view of economics. In incorrectly claiming that for Hegel philosophy reduces to method, Marx proposes to examine Proudhon's method in a series of seven observations.²³ This approach enables Marx to criticize Proudhon as well as Hegel, who allegedly lies in the background, while making an important point about categorical interpretations of experience.

The categorial approach to experience is as old as Aristotle. In his treatise on the *Categories* (from the Greek word *kategoria*, meaning “predicate”) he distinguishes ten categories, or predicables. Kant, who later complained that Aristotle’s categories form a mere rhapsody, controversially claimed to deduce them in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. He argued that a set of twelve fixed and unchangeable categories is rooted in the structure of the human understanding. In the *Science of Logic* Hegel offers a rather different categorial approach.

In criticizing Proudhon, Marx has in mind Hegel’s view of categories for which he proposes an alternative. Starting with a passage from Proudhon on economic categories, Marx notes that economists base their vision of modern society on a series of fixed, immutable, and eternal categories. He makes the important point that categories are not primary, but secondary as the theoretical expression of real human life (VI, 162). Categories are not independent, but rather dependent; they follow from and describe human life, which is prior to its (theoretical) description. This simple but important observation is allegedly violated by Hegel’s logical approach in which, through an abstract method, everything is reduced to a strictly logical category. Distantly following Hegel’s abstract categorial analysis in religion, in which real life is reduced to a simple representation in the mind, Proudhon seeks to do the same thing in political economy. Like a philosopher, Proudhon thinks that categories, or theoretical expressions, are prior to social relations, which he misrepresents as mere illustrations of theory (VI, 165). In opposition to philosophers like Hegel as well as political economists like Proudhon, Marx insists that categories are not fixed, but merely “historical and transitory products” (VI, 166).

Marx, who consistently takes a “holistic” approach to political economy, objects to Proudhon’s failure to do so as well. The limitation of his approach lies in studying economy piecemeal, although economic relations form a living whole in terms of which each must be understood. Proudhon fails to see that society is composed of a series of dynamic, or dialectical, relations (VI, 168). The result is neither real history, nor history on the level of the abstract idea of history, which Marx here and elsewhere imputes to Hegel. It is rather an atemporal view in which nothing happens (VI, 171), and in which Proudhon is obliged to depend on Providence as an explanatory factor (VI, 175). By implication, Proudhon understands political economy as providing an ahistorical grasp of fixed features of reality. For Marx, on the other hand, political economy is a historical science, which studies historically changing relations of social life. Such relations are no more than a transitory product of a struggle which, at the time of the industrial revolution,

gave rise to a society which is itself dominated by the struggle between different social classes.

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to more rapid consideration of four topics: division of labor and machinery, competition and monopoly, property or rent, and strikes and combinations of workers. In reverting to his attitude in the first chapter, Marx stresses the limits of Proudhon's comprehension of these topics. Again using Feuerbachian terminology, he suggests that for Proudhon, who sees things upside down, the division of labor exists from all time, whereas it is in reality only the consequence of competition (VI, 183). Division of labor cannot precede the workshop, whose existence it presupposes (VI, 186). In correcting Proudhon's view that division of labor and the introduction of machines are opposites, Marx notes that automation only increases the division of labor (VI, 188).

In the discussion of property or rent, Marx summarizes and criticizes Ricardo for supposing that rent, like other relations of production, is a so-called eternal category (VI, 202). He is more severe with respect to Proudhon's proposed revision of Ricardo's theory that the proprietor intervenes on behalf of others in appropriating the surplus of production over its cost. Marx describes this approach as amounting to answering the problem "by formulating the same problem and adding an extra syllable" (VI, 199).

The remarks on strikes and worker coalitions, written at a time when the union movement was only beginning to take shape, again show Marx's interest in practical measures. Rejecting Proudhon's suggestion that strikes only result in increasing prices (VI, 206), Marx points out that production on a large scale brings together workers who share an interest in ameliorating their conditions. The association on economic grounds of people who work to earn their living creates a class, which can only defend itself by political means. Marx repeats his view of the proletariat as produced by any society founded on the division of interests along economic lines. The struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which possesses the means of production, will, in Marx's opinion, inevitably produce a revolution followed by a classless society. It is only when there are no more classes that "social evolutions will cease to be political revolutions" (VI, 212).

Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy

The period beginning in 1848, which ushered in revolutionary changes in Europe, changed Marx's life as well. As the political situation degenerated,

the Belgian police clamped down on political refugees and political activists like Marx. He was given 24 hours to leave the country on March 3 and then expelled to France, where he arrived on March 5. In Paris, Marx immediately continued his political activities in reestablishing the Communist League while plans were afoot to publish a new newspaper in Cologne to be called the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Marx arrived in Cologne in April, was joined by Engels shortly thereafter, and put out the first issue of the newspaper on June 1. During this time, Marx continued his political activity, traveling during the late summer to Berlin and Vienna and using his editorship of the paper to criticize public policies, for instance in a call to cease paying taxes. Thus provoked, the authorities duly reacted against Marx. In February 1849 he went to court twice to respond to charges of libelling a public servant and inciting open rebellion. On May 16 he received an order of expulsion on the grounds that his newspaper articles were inciting open rebellion against the state. Marx and Engels left Cologne on May 19 for Frankfurt. On June 1 Marx left Frankfurt for Paris, where he immediately resumed his political activity. He was quickly notified that, if he wished to remain in France, he would have to live, not in Paris, but in the department of the Morbihan in Brittany in the northwestern part of the country, near the Atlantic coast. On August 24, following Engels's suggestion, Marx left for London, where he was followed by his wife and three children on September 15. He remained in London in precarious circumstances, often supported by Engels and occasionally by others, for the rest of his life. It is here in very difficult material conditions that the man who knew more about modern industrial society than any other living person, but was unable or unwilling to earn a living for his family, wrote three of his most important texts: the *Grundrisse*, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, and the first volume and surviving manuscripts of *Capital*.

The original manuscript of the enormous work called the *Grundrisse*, over 1,100 pages in German, filling seven notebooks, and which was composed during the winter of 1857–8, was later lost under still unclarified circumstances. It seems certain that what is now known as the *Grundrisse* was not only never finished but was never intended to appear, at least not in its present form. The work we possess is not only a rough draft, but also internally inconsistent, often longwinded and tedious, but frequently insightful, on occasion brilliant. The unfinished nature of the work is clear in the fact that it includes repetitious treatments of the same or very similar themes in different parts of the book, different statements of the overall plan, long digressions on topics which interested Marx at the time, and so on.

The style of the writing is very different in this text. Marx's earlier

tendency, in the manner of an advanced student, to comment, often in detail, on a series of passages taken from a particular author, is still present in the work on Proudhon. This tendency has mainly been replaced here by an enormous effort to synthesize a much greater mass of materials derived from Marx's detailed reading in a wide series of allied fields, including quotations in a variety of languages. The text itself is mostly in German with numerous sentences in English and with an occasional sentence in French. This is not surprising since, when he wrote the *Grundrisse*, Marx was living in London and had previously resided in Paris and Brussels. At a time when Marx was steeped in often appallingly dry economic materials, the writing reveals his great learning in many fields. The text is replete with quotations from English, French, and German sources, but also from Latin and Greek, which Marx had learned as a schoolboy, and which he continued to practice all his life. There are references to many, many political economists, but perhaps also to as many non-economists, including Homer, Aristotle, Aristophanes, Augustus Caesar, Cato, Charles the Second, Charles the Fifth, Charlemagne, Dante, Euripides, and so on.

The book, which did not appear in Marx's lifetime, was initially published in Moscow in two volumes in 1939 and 1941, but not distributed or even known in the West.²⁴ When it was published in the West for the first time in 1953, it immediately attracted attention.²⁵ The order in which the manuscripts appeared and even the title were chosen by the Russian editors of the work.²⁶ The very important preface to the *Grundrisse* was published in *Die Zeit* by Karl Kautsky in March 1903 long after Marx's death, but well before the rest of the book.

This book can be included here under the transitional writings, not only in virtue of the chronological period to which it belongs, but also because, despite its stress on political economy, as much as anything Marx later wrote, it retains a strong philosophical flavor. The methodological reflections in the introduction to the book, which are among the most important and most well thought out in all Marx's writings, show him still wrestling with difficult questions about how to formulate a theory of the social context, questions which are clearly posed in the *Paris Manuscripts* and implicitly even earlier.

In the *The Poverty of Philosophy* Marx, a German trained as a philosopher and self-trained in economics, criticized Proudhon, the Frenchman self-trained in economics, contemporary views of political economy and German philosophy, while depicting himself as a German economist. In the *Grundrisse*, continuing the concern with science which remains a constant theme in his writings, Marx suggests he has provided "the first scientific representation of

an important view of social relations.”²⁷ If this aim is central to his position, then this remark can be taken as an indication that it is only in the *Grundrisse* that he thinks he has finally worked out the main aspects of a scientific view of social relations.

This book is the first of a series of Marx's works bearing the words “critique of political economy” in the title. It is known that Marx had at one time planned to use the title “Critique of the Economic Categories.”²⁸ This theme is arguably on the agenda in Marx's earlier, more ostensibly philosophical writings, where he outlines a critique of Hegel's view of civil society in the modern liberal state. It is even more clearly on the agenda in the *Paris Manuscripts*, where he counters Smith and other economists who over-optimistically stress the useful consequences of modern economic liberalism, in emphasizing the negative consequences for individual workers in a liberal economic system, which is not stable but slated to disappear.

In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx formulated the initial version of the theory of modern industrial society which he later developed in a number of texts under the heading of a critique of political economy. The *Grundrisse* – from the plural of the German word *Grundriss*, meaning “outline” – is a work unpublished during Marx's lifetime, which like the *Paris Manuscripts* did not belong to the writings available when Marxism was taking shape.

The *Grundrisse* is the result of what Marx called fifteen years of research comprising the best period of his life stretching from the *Paris Manuscripts* in 1844 until 1857–8 when the text as it has come down to us was completed.²⁹ This book is the unintended result of Marx's desire, in the wake of the *Paris Manuscripts*, and urged on by Engels,³⁰ to write a work to be entitled *A Critique of Politics and Economics* in two volumes. A contract for such a work was signed with Leske on February 1, 1845, shortly before Marx, under pressure from Guizot, the French Minister of the Interior, because of his political activities, left Paris for Brussels.

Marx, who was not only a polymath but also an omnivorous reader all his life, always found it very difficult to finish a manuscript for publication. Most of the works we now possess, including some of the writings prior to the *Paris Manuscripts*, the *Manuscripts* themselves, the *Grundrisse*, and the later volumes of *Capital*, are no more than unfinished drafts. Since Marx constantly procrastinated, it is not surprising that the contract was cancelled in February 1847, when the publisher lost patience with Marx's inability to deliver the manuscript. Nor is it surprising that when the publisher indicated his intention to end the contract, Marx replied that the work would soon be finished.³¹

Marx subsequently lost interest in the economics project for a time, when

he was distracted by other things, including the critique of Proudhon and the writing (with Engels) of the "Communist Manifesto." After the failure of the 1848 revolution, he became interested in the project again. The manuscripts which make up this huge book were written in a very short time, although Marx spent much longer collecting an even more enormous amount of material for his project. In the summer of 1850 and throughout 1851 he read intensively in the Reading Room of the British Museum. Engels, who wrote to Marx in January 1851 to urge him to hurry up,³² was told by Marx in April that he expected to finish in five weeks.³³ In June Marx wrote to Joseph Weydemeyer (1818–66), a Prussian officer and socialist who later emigrated to the US, to say that he was spending the whole day in the museum and hoped to finish in six to eight weeks.³⁴ In January 1852, when Marx wrote to Weydemeyer to ask him to find an American publisher for the work,³⁵ he had again abandoned the project except for a short period in the summer of that year. After the financial crisis of 1857 Marx returned to the project. In a letter of December 8, 1857 to Engels, Marx, who expected a revolution, said he was "working madly through the nights on a synthesis of my economic studies, so that at least I will have the rough draft [Grundrisse] clear before the déluge."³⁶

All observers agree that the *Grundrisse* is a singularly important text, for some observers even the key text in Marx's writings which links together the early *Paris Manuscripts* and *Capital*, widely regarded as his unfinished masterpiece. According to David McLellan, the first to attempt a partial translation of the *Grundrisse* (1971) into English, this is the most fundamental of Marx's writings, the centerpiece of his thought.³⁷ Martin Nicolaus, who provided the first complete English translation of this book (1973), contends it is the test of any serious interpretation of Marx.³⁸ The editors of the *Collected Works*, at the time of writing the most recent (1986) and probably the most complete translation of the book (many citations by Marx are restored, the paragraphing differs from that of the Nicolaus translation, and so on), treat it as the rough draft of *Capital*, which they regard as the crowning work of Marx's career and a work of genius.³⁹ If this book is as important as all observers agree, it is then at least ironic, as McLellan notes, that it is the last of Marx's major writings to be translated into English.⁴⁰

McLellan, Nicolaus, and other observers agree that the *Grundrisse* provides key elements leading to *Capital*, for which this unfinished outline provides a wider framework. The version of this text which appears in the *Collected Works* treats the *Grundrisse* as the first or original rough version of *Capital*.⁴¹ No one denies continuity between the views expressed in the *Grundrisse* and those developed in later writings. There is a rare unanimity about the importance

of the *Grundrisse* for Marx's later writings. Yet it is more than that, since it is also continuous with the earlier writings leading up to it. It is an important stage in the series of efforts, beginning with the early critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* on the basis of an economic conception of private property to criticize political economy and to formulate a theory of modern industrial society, which continue throughout Marx's later writings.

Marx's critical interest in political economy, which began at the same time as his early critique of Hegel, was already in full swing as early as the *Paris Manuscripts*. In the preface to that work he calls attention to the links between economics and such other themes as law, morality, politics and so on, while insisting that his conclusions follow from a careful study of political economy. He also announces his intention to provide a connected treatment of the different themes in what was later to become the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*. In the wake of the *Paris Manuscripts* he continued to deepen and to elaborate his original project. According to Engels, Marx's critique of bourgeois economy, which began in the 1840s, was completed only at the end of the 1850s.⁴² Yet that cannot be right, since it continues throughout *Capital*, whose first volume only appeared in 1867, and which was never finished.

The claim that the *Grundrisse* does not break with, but continues and develops the concern manifest as early as the *Paris Manuscripts* to formulate a view of modern industrial society, points to a continuity in the writings of Marx, early and late. This claim is widely disputed in the literature. Sidney Hook, a qualified observer, insists there is rather more discontinuity than continuity in Marx's writings.⁴³ In fact, the continuity between the *Grundrisse* and earlier writings is deep and important.

There is, to begin with, continuity in the continued attention to Hegel, Proudhon, and Ricardo. The *Grundrisse* centers on a critique of these three figures whom Marx has considered earlier. Marx's continued attention to Proudhon in the *Grundrisse* is justified by the status of the latter, certainly after the revolutions of 1848, as perhaps the leading socialist at the time. In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx was more concerned with Smith than Ricardo. In later writings he gives increasing attention to the latter, whose influential theory of rent is an ingredient in the formulation of his own theory of surplus value. In the attack on Proudhon in the *Poverty of Philosophy* Marx devotes detailed attention to Ricardo's view of value. Hegel, who was central to the initial formulation of Marx's early view of modern industrial society, continues to influence his later work on this topic.

In a letter to Marx written in 1851, Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64), a German lawyer and socialist active in the working-class movement, and author of a study of Heraclitus, said he was impatient to see the work of "Ricardo

turned socialist and Hegel turned economist."⁴⁴ Lassalle's letter was prescient in indicating the direction that Marx's studies were taking at the time he was working toward the *Grundrisse*. Marx, who came to think that Lassalle was making unauthorized use of his writings, which he simply plagiarized without understanding them, later denounced him in the preface to the first edition of *Capital*. In criticizing Ricardo, Marx revises the latter's orthodox economic view for his own socialist purposes; and in criticizing Hegel, he also appropriates aspects of the latter's philosophy for a general theory of contemporary industrial society.

There is also an important verbal continuity suggesting that Marx consulted his still unpublished *Paris Manuscripts* in the preparation of the *Grundrisse*. It has been pointed out that Marx begins the chapter on capital in the *Grundrisse* by repeating almost verbatim passages, perhaps because he had reworked passages from the *Manuscripts*, on need, species-being, the parallels between religious and economic alienation, and so on.

A further element of continuity concerns the attitude toward Hegel. In a letter to Engels from January 1858, Marx mentions that his method has been influenced by a chance look at Hegel's *Logic* which Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810–76), a German poet and member of the Communist League, had sent him.⁴⁵ The suggestion that Marx's concern with Hegel at this point, or that his residual use of Hegelian terminology, was merely superficial, is contradicted by his repeated attention to Hegel throughout the *Grundrisse*, beginning with the introduction. Even an orthodox Marxist like Nicolaus acknowledges that, despite his criticism of Hegel, Marx shares his predecessor's central concern with how to grasp the changing economic system of modern industrial society.⁴⁶

Still another form of continuity concerns the treatment of alienation. The frequent claim that, after the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx was no longer concerned with this theme is clearly contradicted by continued attention to the concept, which retains all its earlier nuances, and the persistence in later writings of the earlier terminology.⁴⁷

It is known from his correspondence that Marx originally intended to divide the project which resulted in the *Grundrisse* into six books, including (1) Capital; (2) Landed property; (3) Wage labor; (4) The state; (5) International trade; and (6) World market. This division is mentioned in a letter before the manuscript was completed⁴⁸ and in another letter to Engels.⁴⁹ Still other divisions of the book are given in the introduction (N 105; XXVIII, 45; M 43) and the work itself (e.g., N 22; XXVIII, 160). What later grew into *Capital* represents merely one of these six books.

The manuscript of the *Grundrisse*, which is preceded by an introduction, is

divided into just two chapters, a relatively short one on money followed by a much longer treatment of capital. The introduction was later suppressed by Marx for the reason that it is better to proceed from the particular to the general, by implication from experience to comments about it.⁵⁰ This agrees with Marx's concern, in reaction against Hegel, and signaled as early as the preface to the *Paris Manuscripts*, to favor empirical analysis.

The introduction to the *Grundrisse*, which is divided into four parts, provides helpful insight into Marx's intentions in writing the work. It begins with general and more specific remarks on production in the first two parts, passing then to general remarks on method, and ending with more general remarks on the consequences of this view.

Economists, such as Smith and Ricardo, as well as philosophers like Rousseau, begin with independent individuals as they supposedly exist in nature. Marx's discussion of production, or more precisely material production, begins with "the socially determined production of individuals" as they exist within a social group which, since the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, takes the form of civil society. Agreeing with Aristotle,⁵¹ Marx claims that man is a *zoon politikon* (from the Greek *zoein*, meaning "living," and *polis*, meaning "city" or by extension "society," literally a "social being" who lives and develops in the state, or society). As a human activity, production is also social. All production is of a certain kind in a certain social situation, hence never general. Now disagreeing with economists – it is at least interesting that he does not include himself among them – Marx claims that they represent production as manifesting so-called suprahistorical, or eternal, laws, parenthetically the same critique he earlier brought against Proudhon, whereas distribution is wholly arbitrary. Marx criticizes this ahistorical approach on two grounds: for breaking apart production and distribution, and for failing to see that as for production there must be general human laws for distribution. He sums up a somewhat confusing argument with the obviously empiricist claim that what are called the general conditions of production are nothing more than abstract conceptions which are never exemplified in pure form.

Economists, mathematicians, and even philosophers typically work with abstractions. In the second part of the introduction, Marx points to a deep similarity between Hegelianism, which depends on abstract concepts, and the usual economic concern with abstract identities. He begins by arguing that production is also consumption. Since a worker consumes his capacities and raw materials in the act of production, production is consumption; and conversely, consumption, as the example of nutrition shows, also involves production. Production and consumption further lead to each other.

The result, to which economists are committed, is a triple identity, in that production and consumption are the same, each is elicited by the other, and each calls forth the other. Since economics is by implication Hegelian, in noting that Hegelians treat production and consumption as identical, Marx is criticizing economics. For Marx, who rejects abstract identity, production and consumption are not identical, but rather two aspects of the same process which begins in the former and leads to the latter.

Distribution falls between production and consumption. In turning to the relation of production and distribution, Marx notes that the former is determined by the latter. In other words, production depends on distribution, which assumes different forms with respect to products, the means of production, and the members of society. It follows that production cannot be treated apart from distribution. The point is that production is not an eternal truth but a function of general historical conditions.

Marx next considers more rapidly exchange and circulation. Circulation is an aspect of exchange, which occurs between production and distribution. Marx shows that exchange belongs to, and is determined by, the sphere of production. In drawing a general conclusion, he rejects the supposedly generally Hegelian economic tendency to identify abstract identities, say between production, distribution, exchange, and consumption, in making two points: first, these elements are not identical, but only members of a single whole; and, second, the entire process is production-driven. Since production is always concrete production, he concludes that "A definite form of production thus determines the forms of consumption, distribution, exchange and *also the mutual relations between these various elements*" (M 33; G 99; XXVIII, 36)

Through consideration of such concepts as production, consumption, distribution, and exchange Marx has so far been arguing that economists employ an abstract approach similar to a supposed Hegelian reliance on abstract identity. In the third part of the introduction, entitled "The method of political economy," Marx provides a more general statement of the view motivating his criticism of what can be called, for want of a better term, "economic Hegelianism." In the book on Proudhon, he argued that categories are not fixed, but intrinsically historical. He now extends this argument in contending that knowledge is never direct, or immediate, but always mediated through categories, and increasingly concrete. In making his argument, he uses "concrete" in a specifically Hegelian sense, opposed to the more usual empirical usage, as the consequence of increasing mediation. His statement, which is one of the most useful methodological passages in his entire corpus, follows from consideration of two alternatives, which we can call Hegelian

and non-Hegelian approaches to economic phenomena as respectively exemplified by older and contemporary political economists.

According to Marx, although it seems best to begin from population, since this is the real and concrete prerequisite of political economy, this is a mistake. For population, which is an abstraction, depends on classes, which in turn depend on exchange, division of labor, and so on. To begin with population is to begin with a general idea of the whole, or a merely imaginary concrete, which is analyzable into simpler ideas. One could, as earlier economists did, return to population as a rich aggregate of many relations. Yet the correct approach is illustrated by later political economists, starting with Smith, who began from simple conceptions such as labor, demand, exchange value, and so on, before concluding with state, international exchange, and world market.

The latter approach is correct, since the concrete is concrete as the combination of many determinations, whereas the former method leads only to abstract definitions. The concrete appears as a process of synthesis, a result, not as a starting point, although it is the real starting point of observation and conception. Marx is claiming that we cannot grasp economic phenomena directly but rather only through the economic categories utilized in modern political economy, in a word against the background of a conceptual framework.

Although he does not say as much, Marx's distinction can be compared to the difference between Hegel's *Logic*, which discusses the movement of categories within thought, and his *Phenomenology* in which he considers different, alternative conceptual frameworks. In the latter, he argues that there can be no immediate knowledge, or sense of certainty, since what we comprehend (now using the words "abstract" and "concrete" in ways opposite to normal usage, in which thought is abstract and direct experience of the world is concrete) is concrete in that it is mediated through the conceptual process. In rejecting the view he identifies with Hegel, Marx in fact only rejects a reading of what occurs in Hegel's *Logic* in favor of what occurs in Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

According to Marx, Hegel exemplifies the former method, which considers the real as the result of thought. Marx might be thinking of Hegel's *Logic*, which begins from abstract being which, without any qualities at all, is said to be the same as, and on examination turns into, nothing. According to Marx, the approach leading from the abstract to the concrete, or the same approach described by Hegel in the *Phenomenology*, is the way thought operates. But it is not the process which generates the concrete. Here, as in Marx's earlier writings, we are meant to infer that Hegel is guilty of confusing what

happens within a person's mind, the way one thinks, in a word mere thought, with what happens in the mind-independent, external world. Continuing his criticism of Hegel, Marx observes it is a mistake to take the movement of categories for the real act of production. What we know when we know, which is the product of the mind, is knowledge of what is independent of it.

After explaining the relation of categories to experience, Marx considers the relation between categories. Simple categories appear as relations, and the category is a relation implying a concrete substratum. A simple category, such as money, can exist earlier than a concrete one. For instance, the simple category of labor is in fact the discovery of modern political economy. According to Marx, Smith made a great advance in defining labor in general as the source of wealth. Labor in general implies the existence of highly developed forms of concrete labor, independent of the individual. This simple abstraction, used by modern political economy as its starting point, is truly realized in the most modern society. It follows that even the most abstract categories are the product of historical conditions. The same categories which enable us to understand contemporary society also help us grasp its predecessors. For this reason, as Marx famously observes, "The anatomy of the human being is the key to the anatomy of the ape" (M 39; G 105; XXVIII, 42). Although it is mistaken to arrange economic categories according to their historical roles, it is correct to arrange them according to their relation in modern society. Marx now draws the conclusion of his criticism of earlier economists and Hegel in favor of economists since Smith. He recommends as the correct procedure to start with general definitions applicable to all stages of society before proceeding to the specific categories which constitute the structure of bourgeois society. These include capital, wage-labor, and landed property, the very categories he analyzed at the beginning of the *Paris Manuscripts*, and so on.

Here as elsewhere in his writings, Marx has been stressing the basic importance of economics with respect to other social phenomena. The introduction ends in a short but important series of remarks about art and culture. Culture in general,⁵² including art, literature, literary criticism, and particularly aesthetics,⁵³ is a theme to which Marx and his followers have made many important contributions.⁵⁴ One might expect Marx to argue for a rigid parallel between economic production and art. On the contrary, he argues for an unequal relation between them in sketching an interesting approach to aesthetics, which has not been adequately explored. According to Marx, there is absolutely no relation between the stage of social development and artistic development. Clearly, certain forms of art can be correlated to certain forms of society.⁵⁵ Greek art obviously presupposes Greek mythology.

The difficulty, as Marx points out, lies in understanding why the canons of artistic achievement bound up with an earlier social stage still provide the model or standard after the Greek world has passed away.

I have followed the introduction in some detail since it presents a series of points whose philosophical interest is evident. It will not be possible, given the philosophical thrust of this essay, to do more than touch on the highlights of a very complex discussion of political economy. The main text of the *Grundrisse* begins with a short chapter of some 115 pages (short in relation to an enormous book almost 900 pages long in translation) on money, which is followed by a much longer chapter of more than 650 pages on capital. Since Marx treats money and capital in separate chapters, he obviously regards them as distinct. In simplest terms, by “money” he means roughly “the measure of the exchange value of a commodity.” A simple definition of a commodity is a product which can be used, or has a use-value, but which also can be exchanged, because it has an exchange value, for instance for an amount of money (N 881–2). By “capital” he means roughly “a privately owned asset, such as the physical means of production, or stocks, and so on, as well as a relation of production in a particular time and place.” Yet in both cases he means more than this since, as he observes about money, it is not a thing, since gold and silver are not money, although money is gold and silver. It is rather a social relation, or system of social relations, between individuals which takes the form of a thing (N 239; XXXVIII, 171)

The chapter on money, which is confusing to read, was composed earlier than the chapter on capital, at a time when Marx was less clear about what he wanted to say. In a letter written while he was still writing the book, Marx indicates his desire to summarize his studies, to propose his own theory, and to produce a brochure on the current economic crisis.⁵⁶ The chapter opens with an attack on Louis Alfred Darimon (1819–1902), a French politician, writer and historian, and a leading Proudhonist, who proposed a system of bank reform through the device of a currency based on labor time. In the course of a convoluted argument, Marx objects late in the chapter on capital that this view is not new. It was raised half a century earlier, for instance by John Gray (1798–1850), an English economist and utopian socialist, and John Francis Bray (1809–97), another English economist and a follower of Robert Owen (1771–1858), the English utopian socialist (N 805; XXIX, 186). The more important point is that an approach to the value of commodities as a function of labor time, or the amount of time necessary to produce a product, reflects no more than the average value of labor time (N 137; XXVII, 75). As an abstraction, this never corresponds to real labor time (N 139; XXVIII, 76–7). It is, then, illusory to think that in abolishing the distinction



between real value and market value, that is through expressing exchange value and price as a function of labor time as opposed to the way in which labor time is objectified in the commodity (N 138; XXVIII, 76), that the distinction between price and value has been resolved.

This criticism presupposes a distinction Marx introduces in the *Grundrisse* between labor and labor power, or labor capacity. What the worker offers is not labor, but labor power required to maintain himself, which he does by objectifying himself in the form of a commodity, or product exchanged for money (N 282–3; XXVIII, 212). In other terms, there is a difference between labor and labor time, and the latter is the quantified form of the power, or the capacity to produce commodities, and, in this way, capital (N 359; XXVIII, 284).

One of the most interesting aspects of Marx's analysis is his insight that the relation of money and value, which seems to be a simple exchange, in fact masks a whole series of social relations. Already at the beginning of the chapter on capital, Marx points out that exchange value, the presupposition of production, implies that the individual exists only as a source of exchange value, which runs counter to his so-called natural existence, division of labor, capital, and so on (N 248; XXVIII, 179).

Marx makes this point, which underlies the view of modern industrial society outlined in the *Paris Manuscripts*, in numerous places and ways in the *Grundrisse*. In a passage on time chits, or labor time tickets, he indicates that exchange value in general expresses a social bond through which each person pursues his own activity within a social connection and mutual dependency of all individuals (N 156–7; XXVIII, 94). Through exchange value a social connection between people is transformed into a social relation in the form of a thing (N 157; XXVIII, 94). The point is that through exchange products are transformed into exchange value, or money, because individuals fall under social relations beyond their control (N 158; XXVIII, 96). In other words, human interaction in the productive process produces an “alien power” standing above and beyond individuals (N 197; XXVIII, 132). Or in more specific, less fateful terms, all production is objectification of individuals (N 226; XXVIII, 158) who, through their work, produce not only exchange value but private property which directs, or commands, one's labor (N 238; XXVIII, 170).

The chapter on money, which began with examination of Darimon's defense of the generally Proudhonist view of value as a function of labor time, shows that exchange value is the visible part of a series of social relations between individuals. This theme is further pursued in the chapter on capital, where Marx discusses the exploitation process resulting in the production of surplus value.

This problem has been on the agenda for quite some time. It is present as early as the little work on Proudhon. Proudhon's famous view that property is theft is in essence the claim that, since work leaves a surplus, what we acquire is acquired through theft, literally through stealing from others. Marx, who thought of Proudhon as simply a bad economist, comes to a similar conclusion on the basis of a more developed grasp of economic phenomena. An instance is his straightforward claim that present wealth, or contemporary capital, is based on the "theft of alien labor time" (N 705; XXIX, 91), or unpaid labor time taken from the worker. He is concerned with surplus value as an unresolved problem central for an understanding of the nature and prospects for modern industrial society. He specifically criticizes earlier efforts by Smith, Ricardo, and the physiocrats,⁵⁷ for instance François Quesnay (1694–1774). Ricardo, for whom Marx consistently expresses respect – he regards later economists as mere simpletons – simply fails to realize the importance of additional, or unpaid, labor time in the process of production (N 326; XXVIII, 252).

What is the origin of surplus value? It clearly does not lie in the exchange process, since for the most part equal values are exchanged. Hence, it must lie elsewhere, namely in the process of circulation as a result of which labor time is converted into money and then into commodities. Marx's answer depends on a view of the relationship between the capitalist, or owner of the means of production, and the worker as inherently unequal, as a result of which the worker receives less than the capitalist. Consider the process of exchange, in which a worker exchanges a quantity of labor for a sum of money, which is in turn exchanged for an equivalent in commodities, which is then consumed, for instance in potatoes which wind up in the stew. This arrangement keeps the worker alive and able to work, but he does not become rich and in fact becomes relatively poorer. In expending his labor, he creates wealth for the capitalist through the accumulation of capital in the process of surrendering in the exchange process "like Esau his birthright for a mess of pottage" (N 307; XXVIII, 233).

The capitalist, who is not a philanthropist, employs workers in order to make a profit. When he deducts his costs, including what he pays the worker, from the price at which he sells the commodities, there has to be a profit, or difference, or more precisely surplus value. In technical language, what he pays to the worker who produces the commodity by as it were objectifying his labor is smaller than its sale price. Surplus labor requires as its condition that "the labor objectified in the price of labor is smaller than the living labor time purchased with it" (N 321; XXVIII, 246). The capitalist has to get more than he gives (N 321; XXVIII, 247) since surplus value is nothing more than

value beyond the equivalent value (N 324; XXVIII, 250). With this in mind, the capitalist appropriates, say, an entire day's work while giving less in exchange, say, half a day's work (N 334; XXVIII, 259).

The nature of surplus value can be expressed in terms of profit. Capital is a self-realizing value which tends to accumulate, hence generating ever more capital, through profit. In a word, "surplus value is profit" (N 746; XXIX, 130). The rate of profit is equivalent to the rate of creation of surplus value. What is called "real surplus value" is measured by "the relation of surplus labor to necessary labor" (N 747; XXIX, 131), or the unpaid labor to the paid labor. This point can be simply put in calling attention to an equivalence, since "Surplus value = *relation of surplus labor to necessary labor*" (N 764; XXIX, passage omitted; G 650). Yet the worker, who depends on the capitalist for work, has no choice about participating in the process of the accumulation of capital as a condition of meeting his needs.

Surplus value is obviously linked to alienation. This concept, which is so important in the *Paris Manuscripts*, does not disappear from Marx's later writings, although there is a shift in emphasis. Already in the *German Ideology* emphasis is placed on the alien relation between men and what they produce as a result of which they become as it were enslaved to a power foreign to them (GI, 55; V, 48). The idea that the alienation of men's activity and products produces a power over them is expressed in the *Grundrisse* through a more elaborate grasp of political economy in passages scattered throughout the book. In a passage on capital, Marx remarks that through labor wealth is created which is a power alien to it; and the more labor creates wealth, the more it is opposed by the capital it creates (N 455; XXVIII, 384). In a complicated passage on the exchange of labor, he notes that exchange value, or the sum for which a commodity can be exchanged, is based on the exchange of objectified labor, or labor in the form of capital, for living labor, or the labor capacity of one or more individuals. The same point can also be expressed as "the relating of labor to its objective conditions – and hence to the objectivity created by itself – as alien property: *alienation* [*Entäusserung*] *of labor*" (N 515; XXVIII, 438). In a further passage late in the chapter on capital, he examines the alienation of the conditions of labor due to the accumulation of capital. In the course of its development, capital increasingly confronts living labor, or individuals, as a real, alien force, which is not historically necessary; it is only necessary for the development of the forces of production. The enormous disparity between workers and owners of the means of production, which results from "the appropriation of alien labor by capital" (N 832; XXIX, 210), is not a mere accident; it is inherent in production in modern industrial society.

As Marx was preparing the *Grundrisse* in the 1850s, as a consequence of the continuing industrial revolution further machinery and automation in general were being developed. Marx regarded automation, which he called an "automatic system of machinery," as a form of capital adopted to facilitate its accumulation (N 692; XXIX, 82). The result of introducing machines is that the worker becomes subordinated to them as "a mere living accessory of this machinery" (N 693; XXIX, 83). The development of the means of labor through machinery is fully consistent with the development of capital. This does not improve but only worsens the lot of the worker, who devotes less time to the production of a single item in order to produce more of them (N 701; XXIX, 87). The worsening of the situation of the individual worker does not happen immediately, but only when, through increasing division of labor, a point is reached at which more and more mechanical operations can be successfully replicated by a machine (N 704; XXIX, 90).

One might be tempted to think that as Marx got further into his economic writings, his earlier revolutionary sentiments would be muted or even disappear. We recall that, before he explicitly turned to political economy in the *Paris Manuscripts*, he was already concerned with a revolutionary solution to real human problems. In the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction," in a famous instance he simply "deduced" the concept of the proletariat. In the *Paris Manuscripts*, when his grasp of political economy was far from what it later became by the time he wrote the *Grundrisse*, he was already concerned with the inherent instability of modern industrial society. He argued there for the likelihood of revolutionary change leading to communism because of the effect of capitalism on individuals. And he suggested that the tendency of wages to decline "leads necessarily to revolution" (B 119; III, 270). In arguing that for economic reasons modern industrial society is inherently unstable, he later indicated that the institution of private property harbors a contradiction between propertylessness and property, or labor and capital, which "drives toward its resolution" (B 152; III, 294). This claim is repeated in almost the same words in *The Holy Family* (IV, 36). This approach is developed further in the *German Ideology*, where the conflict between productive forces and social relations is described as the driving force of history (GI 89; V, 74).

In the *Grundrisse* Marx develops an analogous claim through the supposed link between the tendential fall in the rate of profit to revolution. One of the clearest discussions occurs late in the chapter on capital, where he argues that at a certain point expansion of the means of production runs up against a limit caused by the tendential fall in the rate of profit. This claim is based on a general analysis of capital, which normally produces a certain amount of

surplus value in the form of profit. Surplus value depends on the ratio of surplus, or unpaid, labor to paid, or necessary labor. As the forces of production are developed, for instance through increasing mechanization, and the role played by workers decreases, the rate of profit of capital decreases. Marx claims that this law, which has never before been grasped, is “the most important law of modern political economy” (N 748: XXIX, 133).

At a certain point the development of the productive forces due to capital impedes further capital accumulation, or self-valorization of capital. In other words, a growing incompatibility arises through the drive to increase the forces of production and the organization of the means of production which has prevailed up until that time. The resulting destruction of capital follows from the decline of profit, leading to a series of crises, which will be contained, culminating in a final crisis which, because it cannot be contained, will overthrow capitalism. In a famous passage, which deserves to be cited at length, Marx writes:

Hence the highest development of productive power together with the greatest expansion of existing wealth will coincide with depreciation of capital, degradation of the laborer, and a most straitened exhaustion of his vital powers. These contradictions lead to explosions, cataclysms, crises, in which by the momentaneous suspension of labor and annihilation of a great portion of capital the latter is violently reduced to the point where it can go on. These contradictions, of course, lead to explosions, crises, in which the momentary suspension of all labor and annihilation of a great part of the capital violently lead it back to the point it is enabled [to go on] fully employing its productive powers without committing suicide. Yet, these regularly recurring catastrophes lead to their repetition on a higher scale, and finally to its violent overthrow. (N 750: XXIX, 134; G 636)

We can end the discussion of the *Grundrisse* with a comment on Marx's view of the prospects for individual human beings in a post-capitalist world. Although there is only occasional mention of communism in this book, as in earlier writings Marx here supposes that communism offers a viable future alternative to capitalism, or the present form of modern industrial society. He foresees the development of individuals in communism in ways no longer determined, or at least not strictly determined, by the tendency of capitalism to accumulate wealth. How this is supposed to affect the individual is never very clear in Marx. We recall that in the *Paris Manuscripts* he somewhat romantically evoked the idea of a new humanity beyond capitalism. In the *German Ideology*, in a famous passage imagining the possibility of life in a future society where there will be no division of labor, the very practice which,

in capitalism, normally forces an exclusive occupation on each person, he writes:

He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity, but each one can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic. (GI 53; V, 47)

In the *Grundrisse* the difference between the worker subservient to capital in modern industrial society and beyond the yoke of economics in communism is again on Marx's mind. But he seems not to have found a definitive solution to the problem. Here he returns beyond the *German Ideology* to his earlier view in the *Paris Manuscripts* in stressing the many-sided development of all human powers. This is understood as a viable alternative to a prevailing economic system which is interested in individuals only as far as their development is economically useful. In a discussion of the nature of wealth, he asks what wealth for an individual is or could be other than "the working out of his creative potentials" (N 488; XXVIII, 411–12) in building upon whatever prior history has taught us, as opposed to the narrow sacrifice within the modern industrial world of the individual to strictly economic aims. In another passage, he points out that this possibility depends for its realization upon the prior development of the means of production, since communism cannot precede but can only follow capitalism (N 542; XXVIII, 465–6). In a passage on competition, he observes that within capitalism, free development is basically limited to what is useful for capital (N 652; CW XXIX, 40). And in a passage on the introduction of automation he remarks that the limitation of labor time provides for individual development "which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individual in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them" (N 706; XXIX, 91). He restates this view in a passage on disposable time in stressing the role of capital in creating the necessary preconditions for people to develop outside the process of production. Certainly, this is not the aim of capitalism, which nonetheless is "instrumental in creating the means of social disposable time, in order to reduce labor time for the whole society to a diminishing minimum, and thus to free everyone's time for their own development" (N 708; XXVIII, 94).

We can bring the discussion of the *Grundrisse* to a close through a brief

remark on Hegel. In writings to this point, Marx has often commented on various aspects of Hegel's position. Yet Hegel's name is mainly absent in this enormous work. There are in all barely half a dozen direct references to Hegel in the book. Two of them occur in the discussion of the method of political economy in the third part of the introduction. One is the claim, which occurs in similar fashion in earlier writings, that Hegel takes thought for the real (N 101; XXVIII, 38). The other is the observation, in a passage on the relation of simple categories to more concrete ones, that for Hegel right, or property-ownership, is the basis of the philosophy of law (N 102; XXVIII, 39). In another passage on value in the chapter on money, Marx disparagingly remarks that market value differs from real value through continual fluctuation but, "as Hegel would say, not by way of abstract identity" (N 137; XXXVIII, 75). Further along in the same chapter, in a passage on precious metals, he comments that "as Hegel would say, the *essence of metal* is best realized in precious metals" (N 174; XXVIII, 110). Later in the book, in the chapter on capital, in discussing Smith he refers in passing to the relation of human activity to nature within production in writing "as Hegel has correctly said it" (N 734; XXIX, 119).

If one had to generalize merely from these minimal references, one would be justified in concluding that, at the time he composed the *Grundrisse*, Marx was no longer interested, or at least not more than mildly interested, in his illustrious predecessor, to whom he refers in passing, as he refers to many different writers. One might infer that since Marx, who trained as a philosopher, knew Hegel's position well, the fact that the latter occasionally came to mind as he was composing the *Grundrisse* is the source of these occasional allusions throughout the book. This inference would be mistaken.

It is fairly obvious that, even in the introduction, Marx's interest in Hegel goes well beyond polite reference to an important philosopher. We recall that in the discussion of appropriate method, where Marx contrasts the approaches of earlier and recent political economy, that is, to begin with an imaginary concrete analyzable into simple ideas or from simple ideas before building to more complex ones, Marx favored the latter. His reasoning – "The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, therefore as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even the point is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation and conception" (N 101; XXVIII, 38) – precisely follows Hegel's own view of the concrete as determined.

One should not overlook the fact that Marx here also criticizes Hegel for allegedly conflating philosophical thought with the world. Let us suspend

judgment on the validity of this criticism until we return to Marx's view of Hegel below. The point to be made here is that, despite Marx's criticism of his great predecessor, Marx remains deeply indebted to him for his own conception of the appropriate approach to political economy. This point can be put more strongly by generalizing Marx's relation to Hegel, which has at this point passed beyond detailed criticism of the latter's view in a critical appropriation of central elements in the formulation of Marx's own position. The main insight which separates Hegel from earlier philosophers, and which Marx adopts in his opposition to bourgeois political economy, is the insight that the world in which we live is not static but historical. Marx's criticism of political economists like Smith and Ricardo rests on his acceptance and elaboration of the Hegelian view that economic relations are not fixed categories but historically mutable relations. Despite his objection to different facets of Hegel's theories, in a deep sense even in the *Grundrisse*, where he has ceased to address Hegel other than in passing, Marx remains a Hegelian.

The point about Marx's indebtedness to Hegel for the proper conception of method can be supplemented by a similar point about modern industrial society. A historical perspective, which denies that the world in which we live is static or unchanging, requires an explanation of change. Hegel is constantly aware of the importance of real opposition, technically called contradictions (from the German *Widerspruch*, meaning "contradiction"), as bringing about social change. For instance, in a passage on morality or abstract conceptions of right and wrong in the *Philosophy of Right*, he remarks on the way that this view evolves through the development of its inherent tensions, or contradictions.⁵⁸ Marx's concern to understand capitalism as a historical stage in the dialectical development of society applies this approach to economic phenomena. His central claim ever since the *Paris Manuscripts*, which is elaborated in great detail in the *Grundrisse*, is roughly that the division of modern industrial society into two main classes with respect to private property will over time lead to the replacement of capitalism by communism.

Notes

- 1 Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, ed. C. P. Dutt, New York: International Publishers, 1941, p. 8.
- 2 See Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Manfred Vogel, Indianapolis, IN: LLA, 1966, §15, n. 1, p. 23.
- 3 For recent discussion, see Sean Sayers, *Marxism and Human Nature*, London: Routledge, 1999.
- 4 See Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Hu-*

- man Activity*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971, pp. 68–72.
- 5 See Lucien Sève, *Man in Marxist Theory and the Psychology of Personality*, trans. John McGreal, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978.
 - 6 See, for example, *ibid.*
 - 7 Some parts of it were published piecemeal earlier. In September 1847, for instance, the monthly *Westphälisches Dampfboot* brought out a chapter on Karl Grün's book, *Die soziale Bewegung in Frankreich und Belgien* (1845).
 - 8 See Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 7.
 - 9 See Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster, New York: Vintage, 1970.
 - 10 For criticism of Althusser's view, see "Le Marx d'Althusser," in Leszek Kolakowski, *L'esprit révolutionnaire*, Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1978, pp. 158–85.
 - 11 For a non-Marxist who accepts this idea, see John McMurtry, *The Structure of Marx's World View*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.
 - 12 Arthur, the editor of a recent edition of this book, simply repeats Engels's claim. See the editor's introduction to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology, Part One*, ed. and intro. C. J. Arthur, New York: International Publishers, 1970, p. 5. See also CW vol. 5, p. xiii: "It was in *The German Ideology* that the materialist conception of history, historical materialism, was first formulated as an integral theory."
 - 13 See the editor's introduction, Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology, Part One*, p. 21.
 - 14 See *ibid.*
 - 15 See Antoine-Louis-Claude Destutt de Tracy, *Eléments d'idéologie*, Brussels, 1801.
 - 16 See Hans Barth, *Truth and Ideology*, trans. Frederic Lilge, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
 - 17 See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1936.
 - 18 For recent discussion, see ch. 3: "Recognition in the Phenomenology of Spirit," in Robert Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 46–68.
 - 19 See Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *System of Economic Contradictions or Philosophy of Poverty* (*Système des contradictions économiques ou Philosophie de la misère*), trans. Benjamin Tucker, Boston: Tucker, 1888.
 - 20 See Marx's letter of December 28, 1846 to Annenkov, in MEW vol. 27, pp. 68–72; CW vol. 38, pp. 95–106.
 - 21 See, for example, George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Cleveland: Meridian, 1970.
 - 22 Proudhon, *Systèmes des contradictions économiques*; Karl Marx, *Misere de la philosophie, Réponse à la Philosophie de la misère de M. Proudhon*, ed. Jean-Pierre Peter, Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1964, p. 52. All quotations from Proudhon are from this volume, which is cited in the text in parentheses by page number.

- 23 This claim is incorrect since Hegel's critique of Kant for separating method from content prevents him from doing so without contradicting himself. For Hegel's criticism see, for example, *The Encyclopedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1991, §10, pp. 33–4.
- 24 According to Rosdolsky, no more than three or four copies of this edition reached the West. See Roman Rosdolsky, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Marxschen Kapital. Der Rohentwurf des Kapital, 1857–8*, 2 vols., Frankfurt am Main and Vienna: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1968, vol. 1, p. 7n.
- 25 See Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Frankfurt am Main and Vienna: Europäische Verlagsanstalt and Europa Verlag, 1953.
- 26 See *ibid.*, p. xiv.
- 27 See letter to Lassalle, November 12, 1858, in MEW vol. 29, p. 566; CW vol. 40, p. 354.
- 28 See letter to Lassalle of February 22, 1858, in MEW vol. 29, p. 550; CW vol. 40, pp. 268–71.
- 29 See Marx's letter to Lassalle, November 12, 1858.
- 30 See Engels's letter to Marx from October 1844 in MEW vol. 27, pp. 5–8; CW vol. 38, pp. 3–6.
- 31 See Marx's letter to Carl Friedrich Julius Leske, August 1, 1846, in MEW vol. 27, p. 449; CW vol. 38, p. 51.
- 32 See Engels's letter to Marx, January 29, 1851, in MEW vol. 27, p. 171; CW vol. 38, p. 271.
- 33 See Marx's letter to Engels, April 2, 1851, in MEW vol. 27, p. 228; CW vol. 38, p. 325.
- 34 See Marx's letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, June 27, 1851, in MEW vol. 27, p. 559; CW vol. 38, p. 377.
- 35 See Marx's letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, January 30, 1852, in MEW vol. 28, p. 486; CW vol. 39, p. 26.
- 36 See MEW vol. 29, p. 225; CW vol. 40, p. 217.
- 37 See Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, ed. and trans. David McLellan, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, pp. 1, 3, 15.
- 38 See Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, p. 7.
- 39 See CW vol. 28, p. xii.
- 40 See Marx, *Grundrisse*, ed. McLellan, preface, p. 3.
- 41 See CW vol. 28.
- 42 See Engels, MEW vol. 6, p. 593.
- 43 See Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966, p. 4.
- 44 See letter of May 12, 1851, cited in Marx, *Grundrisse*, ed. McLellan, p. 5.
- 45 See Marx's letter to Engels, January 16, 1858, in MEW vol. 29, p. 259.
- 46 See Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. Nicolaus, p. 30.

- 47 On the issue of the continuity of Marx's concern in later writings with alienation, see István Mészáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation*, London: Merlin, 1970, pp. 217–27. In the *Grundrisse* typical passages on alienation can be found on pp. 162, 455, 515, 779, and 831.
- 48 See Marx's letter to Lassalle, February 22, 1858.
- 49 See Marx's letter to Engels, 2 April 1858, MEW vol. 29, p. 312; CW vol. 40, p. 298.
- 50 See MEW vol. 13, p. 7.
- 51 See Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. and intro. T. A. Sinclair, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970, I, 2, p. 28: "It follows that the state belongs to the class of objects which exist in nature, and that man is by nature a political animal; it is his nature to live in the state."
- 52 See, for example, Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- 53 See, for example, Georg Lukács, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*, 2 vols., Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1987.
- 54 See Louis Dupré, *Marx's Social Critique of Culture*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.
- 55 On this point, see Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry*, London: Macmillan and St. Martin's Street, 1937.
- 56 Letter to Engels of December 18, 1857, in MEW vol. 29, p. 232; CW vol. 40, pp. 224–5.
- 57 These were the economists of the eighteenth century who favored a liberal agricultural policy because of their view that agriculture was an essential source of national wealth.
- 58 See Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, §112, pp. 77–8.

4

Marx's Mature Economic Writings

I come now to what, for want of a better term, I will call Marx's mature economic writings. To be sure, if this term is meaningful at all, then it must also include the *Grundrisse*, perhaps also the book on Proudhon, since the former, if not the latter, is already the product of a mature author in full possession of the most important economic views of his time as well as the main outlines of his own model of modern industrial society. Certainly, by the time he composed the *Grundrisse* Marx's project had assumed very firm, detailed shape in his mind even as he continued to work it out through additional research. Yet the project he fully understood in writing that book only took the final form, which he restated and elaborated further in *Capital*, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Here, as in the later book, he begins the analysis with the theory of commodities. With that in mind, and mindful that there are no sharp breaks or discontinuities in his development, it is nonetheless reasonable to see *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and *Capital* as belonging to a distinct phase in Marx's corpus, his mature economic writings.

It will be useful to introduce a note about the procedure to be followed in this chapter. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* is important for two reasons: the famous preface, which is often taken as the single most helpful statement of Marx's mature position; and the way that in this book Marx recentered his model of modern industrial society around the concept of the commodity, which he restates at length in *Capital*. There is little doubt if one has to choose between the two works, one will opt for *Capital*, which presents a later, more developed, clearer, definitive account of Marx's view of commodities. To avoid repetition, and since I think that where the two works overlap *Capital* is preferable, I will limit the account of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* mainly to the preface before jumping to *Capital*.

Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*

In February 1858 Marx began to seek to have the results in the notebooks which made up the *Grundrisse*, but which did not appear during his lifetime, published in Germany. His work on the projected book was hindered by his always difficult financial situation, which forced him to seek temporary work in order to provide for a family which constantly lived in the most precarious circumstances, and his illness with hepatitis. Lassalle, with whom he had remained in contact, and who had just published a work on Heraclitus, arranged for him to bring out his economic study with the same publisher, Franz Duncker, located in Berlin. Marx wrote the manuscript from August 1858 until January 1859. Although he sent his work to the publisher on January 26, 1859, publication was delayed several months by the printing of a pamphlet by Engels on military strategy, *Po and Rhein* (*Po und Rhein*), in which he argued against natural military boundaries, and the printing of another pamphlet by Lassalle on the same theme, called *The Italian War and the Prussian Task* (*Der italienische Krieg und die Aufgabe Preussens*). Marx's book was finally published in June 1859.

The result is a book as unlike the *Grundrisse* as any two works by the same author can be. Marx was never a man of few words. In comparison to many of his other works, such as the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* is astonishingly short, barely 150 pages. This shows that when he wanted to, which was rare, Marx was fully capable of confining his thought to manageable proportions. Like the *Grundrisse* this work contains an introduction and two chapters on capital and money, but in inverse order. The under-title of the chapter on capital indicates that this book is only the first of six which were originally planned. In October 1859 Marx began writing the next volume on receiving an inquiry from Lassalle about his progress in completing the work. In January and February 1860, he worked on it again. In a letter to Lassalle in January 1860, he suggested that Lassalle not write anything on the topic until he had a chance to publish the second volume, but that he also needed five more books to do so.¹ In a letter to Engels on February 3, 1860, he suggested that the next volume would be ready in six weeks.² But the subsequent parts of the work were never published, or were published only in the form of *Capital*. In fact, the preface to the first German edition of that work opens with the statement that it forms the continuation of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* for which the research has in the meanwhile been interrupted by a lengthy illness.

Marx's famous preface to this work, a model of concision, like the "Communist Manifesto" and the "Theses on Feuerbach," is one of the most celebrated texts in his entire corpus. Here he comes as close as he ever did to explaining basic aspects of his general position in a way which usefully clarifies philosophical aspects of the overall view. Since this short text is important, it will be useful to follow it closely, in part line by line, paraphrasing as we go.

Marx begins by stating that he here examines "the system of bourgeois economy in the following order: capital, landed property, wage-labor, the State, foreign trade, world market" (XXIX, 261), the same collection of themes he has already picked out as the object of the *Grundrisse*. His indication that he has already completed the series of monographs containing these topics is misleading. They were not ready when the book was published, although Marx had already done an enormous amount of research, and he did not complete them later.

The remark about omitting a general introduction which has already been drafted can only refer to the introduction to the *Grundrisse*. Marx's admonition that the reader will need "to advance from the particular to the general" (XXIX, 261) exactly parallels his methodological claim in the earlier introduction that the proper approach is from simple categories, such as labor, division of labor, and so on, to more concrete categories, such as population.

Marx now indicates a point he has been elaborating since his earliest criticism of Hegel; that is, that economics is in some undefined sense prior to all other kinds of social phenomena, which accordingly need to be understood in terms of it. Legal relations and types of state cannot be grasped either directly or through the so-called "general development of the human mind," an obvious reference to Hegel, but rather as rooted in the "material conditions of life" (*materielle Lebensverhältnisse*). This is what Marx, following Hegel as well as eighteenth-century French and English thinkers, calls civil society.

It is usual in this discussion to refer to this relation as one of superstructure to base. Using this terminology, Marx's point amounts to the claim that the superstructure, including legal relations and types of state, depends on and can only be understood through the economic base, or material conditions in general. In a famous turn of phrase, Marx summarizes this claim in the statement that "the anatomy of this civil society, however, is to be sought in political economy" (CW XXIX, 262). We are meant to infer that Hegel's use of the catch-all term "civil society" to designate "the material conditions of life" includes not only political economy but also other things. We recall that in the *Philosophy of Right* under this term Hegel includes not only the

system of needs, where he treats some main concepts of political economy, but also sections on the administration of justice and the police. When generalized, Marx's suggestion amounts to the idea – familiar from the recent slogan “It's the economy, stupid” – that economics is the main explanatory factor in comprehending modern industrial society.

In a single complex sentence, Marx now describes the principle following from his examination of Hegel and then his study of political economy which, he affirms, has remained the guiding principle of his studies since they began in Paris, from the *Paris Manuscripts* until the present work. In previous writings – for instance in the account of alienation in the *Paris Manuscripts* and in the *Grundrisse* in the description of exchange – Marx emphasized that, in meeting their needs in modern industrial society, individuals enter into a process they do not control. Marx reaffirms a form of this same point in more precise, more informative language. Following Hegel, who calls attention to the relation between human needs and political economy, he notes three additional facets. First, since the economic process is beyond individual control, the individual is obliged to submit to it in order to meet his basic needs. Second, economic relations are not indefinite, but definite; that is, either of one type or another. Third, the precise way in which a particular individual relates to the economic process, that is the contingent form the relation takes, is not invariant but rather dependent on its stage of development. In an important passage, he writes: “In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of the material forces of production” (XXIX, 263).

Like Hegel, Marx believes that human beings mainly meet their needs through economic activity within civil society. Now it makes eminently good sense, since continued personal existence is mainly more important than anything else, and since continued personal existence depends on economic activity, to hold that everything else we do is in some undefined sense dependent on our economic activity. Marx now makes that point. In place of the term “civil society,” which in Hegel refers to the totality of the material conditions of life, Marx now refers to the totality of the relations of production. “The totality of these relations of production [*Die Gesamtheit dieser Produktionsverhältnisse*] constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation [*die reale Basis*], on which arises a legal and political superstructure [*Überbau*] and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness” (XXIX, 263).

This statement establishes an order of priority between the economic structure of society (the basis) and everything else (the superstructure). Since the

economic base is not fixed, but historically variable, the type of life one leads depends on, or is a function of, the particular way that real individuals meet their needs. It is not by chance that, say, workers in an automobile factory tend to think in one way or another. How they think is determined by the fact that they work in a particular industry at a particular moment in the development of modern industrial society. Marx, who does not provide any specific examples, now makes the more general point that the superstructure depends on the economic base: "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life" (XXIX, 263).

The superstructure–base model which Marx delineates here has not so far appeared in that form in his writings. It is, however, implicit in the view in *The German Ideology* that consciousness depends on life, hence on material conditions. There, pains were taken to argue that consciousness is determined by, but does not itself determine, life. This thesis would be indefensible if understood as asserting that in any and all conditions consciousness is determined by life. But it seems sound when understood as asserting that for the most part, or in the first instance, that is, prior to reflection, this is the case. Marx now repeats verbatim the claim from *The German Ideology*: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (XXIX, 263).

Marx has so far established three points. First, relations of production are independent of individuals. Second, the economic base "determines" the superstructure. Third, consciousness is a function of the economic base. Taken together, these three theses constitute the framework of a powerful view of human beings as not only social but above all economic beings. In place of the idea of individuals as defined, say, by reasoned speech, or as made in the image of God, Marx proposes a clearly Hegelian view of man as a *homo economicus*, in which the drive to meet one's needs is paramount in what people do and how they should be understood.

Since the second point is puzzling, this might be the place to open a parenthesis. Left open is how to understand the "determination" exerted by the base on the superstructure. Is the relation unidirectional? Is there a reciprocal influence of the superstructure on the base? Marx does not tell us. It seems reasonable to believe that our ideas about the world and ourselves are at least partially shaped by economic forces. It also seems reasonable that when we become aware of such forces we can intervene in various ways, for instance by modifying the rules governing the way the economy functions, and so on. That would suggest an interactionist model in which the base determines the superstructure which is in turn determined by the base.

The question of what Marx means in suggesting that the base determines the superstructure remains unclear. In a famous letter written after Marx's death, Engels suggests an interactionist model while continuing to insist that economic factors are ultimately decisive. "According to the materialist conception of history the determining element in history is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life."³ Engels is clearly suggesting that one should not overemphasize economics, since not everything can be explained by it. Yet precisely what claim is being made? In a concrete situation can one look to economics as the main explanatory factor? Or does each situation require a different analysis in which economics plays a variable role?

Modern industrial society is defined by capitalism which, Marx further holds, is unstable. In preceding writings Marx has argued that its instability is due either to its effect on individuals or its own inherent tensions. Eschewing a choice between particular models, he now makes the more general, quasi-Hegelian point that modern industrial society harbors tensions which, at a certain point, can no longer be contained, leading to its overthrow. Recurring now to the formula of *The German Ideology*, he identifies the destabilizing factor in capitalism as the incompatibility, or in a word the contradiction, between the drive to develop the forces of production and the way that property relations are organized. "At a certain stage of development the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto" (XXIX, 263).

The reasoning behind this claim has been elaborated in the *Grundrisse* in the law of the tendential fall in the rate of profit. The very economic system which develops the means of production loses its viability at a certain point. The fall in the rate of profit leads to a cycle of economic crises as well as to further alienation of the worker in order to increase the rate of profit by increasing the return on capital, and so on. Since capitalism depends on the accumulation of capital, when this is no longer possible, or no longer sufficiently possible, then the private ownership of the means of production which had made possible economic expansion becomes a hindrance. "From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into fetters" (XXIX, 263).

Were this to occur, capitalism, whose existence turns on the ever further accumulation of capital, would be destabilized. The result would be the series of crises Marx foresaw in the *Grundrisse*. He now repeats this claim in different language: "Then begins an era of social revolution" (XXIX, 263). The presupposition of this claim is two-fold. On the one hand, capitalism will

remain stable as long as capital accumulates. On the other hand, when for reasons intrinsic to capitalism the rate of profit, hence the accumulation of capital, declines, the liberal economic system itself must and will give way to another economic system.

This claim is relevant to the relation of the superstructure to the economic base. Since political economy is so fundamental to social life, societies organized along different economic lines will have different superstructures, including different types of legal codes, different types of government, perhaps even different forms of literature and philosophy. In short, since the whole range of non-economic phenomena found in a given society is in the final analysis dependent on its economic base, to change its economic structure is to bring about change in its superstructure. "The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure" (XXIX, 263).

The superstructure–base model with which Marx is working here suggests a further difference between three levels: the economic base, the non-economic superstructure, and consciousness of the surrounding social world, including both superstructure and base. There is a further difference between changes on these three levels. In reverting to the view of *The German Ideology* Marx treats consciousness as ideology in a characterization which is justified if and only if he has in mind an initial, non-reflective form of consciousness. Otherwise, the theory would simply be inconsistent. Changes in the economic base will give rise to corresponding changes in the superstructure, the level on which individuals become aware of and struggle with each other about the deeper economic transformation. Conversely, such domains as law, politics, religion, art, and philosophy are not, whatever their practitioners think, autonomous, but rather depend on prior economic conditions. Any alteration of the economic base will lead to struggles within the non-economic superstructure. "In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out" (XXIX, 263).

Since the prevailing view about economic change is ideological, hence false, at stake is how to evaluate our self-awareness. The proper approach is to explain appearance in terms of a deeper reality. Like a Freudian psychologist, who explains manifest psychic phenomena through deeply rooted, but hidden psychic conflicts, Marx accounts for our consciousness of ourselves through economic relations of which we are mainly unaware. The

difference is that a depth psychologist seeks to explain individual neuroses, whereas Marx means to account for our understanding of the evolution of society. Since economic changes can be studied scientifically, the economic struggle characteristic of capitalism can be explained through a scientific approach which supersedes whatever individuals might think about it. In other words, the type of scientific theory featured in Marx's book is intended as a true account about the economic basis of modern industrial society, an account which pierces the veil of illusion woven by ideology, or false consciousness, about it. "Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production" (XXIX, 263).

In the *Grundrisse*, where Marx asserted that at a given point in time the powers of production pose an obstacle for capital, he presumably meant that the decline in the rate of profit would lead to a series of economic crises which in the unspecified long run could not finally be contained. The development of the forces of production obviously depends on the relations of production. Different social formations have different potentials in that regard. And just as obviously new relations of production cannot, hence do not, arise before the conditions for their emergence have been met. The idea of skipping over a particular stage for which the material conditions have not been met is not realistic. Marx now qualifies this double claim by linking the development of forces possible in a given social formation with the introduction of a new formation in an obviously romantic assertion about the extent to which such forces can be developed. "No social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society" (XXIX, 263).

In short, each social stage develops the conditions for its successor, which are only finally realized when it has itself undergone the full developmental cycle in realizing whatever forces presuppose its existence. This leads to a conclusion which, although apparently naive, follows directly from the argument. The conclusion depends upon equating the tasks which mankind supposedly sets for itself and the ever further development of the forces of production. In line with his explanation of all non-economic phenomena, in a word the entire superstructure, through an economic model, Marx simply assumes without argument that all human goals can be represented in econ-

omic terms. This is unlikely since, as he later points out in *Capital*, the real human goals lie beyond the constraints of capitalism. Since in Marx's opinion the succeeding social stage develops only when its material conditions have been realized, then there is no human task which people cannot resolve. "Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation" (XXIX, 263).

Fair enough. But it is important to be clear about what Marx is claiming. His point at most concerns no more than the evolution of modern industrial society. He is obviously not supposing, say, that a proof for Fermat's last theorem will necessarily be found. Although mathematicians, in the wake of Pierre Fermat (1601–65), the great French mathematician, were concerned with this proof over a period of hundreds of years, there is nothing in Marx's view which allows either optimism or pessimism in this regard. His optimism only concerns further development of the forces of production, for which he apparently sees no limit, scientific or otherwise, other than the production of its material conditions.

Marx's general assertion is obviously very vague. An economic formation is nothing more than a form of ownership which appears as early as the division of labor. *The German Ideology* identified five forms of ownership (see GI 43ff.; see V 32ff.): tribal ownership (*Stammeigentum*, from the German *Stamm*, meaning roughly "a community of people descended from a common ancestor," and *Eigentum*, meaning "property"); ancient communal and state ownership in which several tribes come together in a city but slavery is retained; feudal or estate property featuring the antagonism between town and country; then capitalism, which is defined by private property or private ownership of the means of production; and finally communism, which will be characterized by the abolition of private property.

Marx now fills in the picture for the present work in distinguishing four forms of production as well as, by implication, the fifth, or communist form. "In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society" (XXIX, 263). In the new list of the periods of economic development, tribal ownership prior to the formation of ancient cities has disappeared and the Asiatic mode of production has made its appearance.

In the context of the preface, this term functions negatively to refer to a failure to make the transition to modern industrial economy. Marx's view of the Asiatic mode of production originated in a series of newspaper articles in 1853 about Asia which were influenced by three figures: James Mill

(1773–1836), the English economist, philosopher, and historian, the author of *History of British India* (1821); François Bernier (1620–88), a French traveler and physician, who wrote a book entitled *Trips Containing the Description of the States of the Great Mogul* (*Voyages contenant la description des états du Grand Mogol*, 1670); and Richard Jones, who published *An Essay on the Distribution of Wealth and the Sources of Taxation* (1831). In order to make ends meet, from 1851 until 1862 Marx separately (and with Engels) wrote articles for the *New York Daily Tribune*. Marx, who consistently regarded private property as indispensable to develop the means of production, held that its absence in Asia was a main source of Asian economic stagnation. In *The German Ideology* stress is placed on the opposition between the town and the country – resulting from the institution of private property – in bringing about the transition to modern industrial society (GI 69; V 64). In the *Grundrisse*, although the term “Asian mode of production” did not appear, Marx argued that in the Orient private property is replaced by mere possession, since “the real proprietor . . . is the commune” (N 484; XXVIII, 408). The oriental city was not independent of, but rather dependent on, agriculture and the countryside in general. Since private property, the condition of the separation of town and country, is lacking, Asian history displays “the indifferent unity of town and countryside” (N 479; XXVIII, 406).

The present or bourgeois mode of production is only the most recent but transitory phase in the development of the modes of production. It constitutes the final form of production, which depends on private property, which will disappear as the condition of the transition to communism. All forms of private property are antagonistic to the full development of individual human beings as sketched, for instance, in the *Grundrisse*. As the last mode of production before the disappearance of private property, bourgeois production, the final antagonistic mode of production, creates the material conditions to supersede itself in a form of production located beyond private property. “The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production – antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals’ social conditions of existence – but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism” (XXIX, 263–4).

From a long-term perspective, the economic process can be divided into two main periods relative to forms of production occurring before and after the disappearance of private property. More generally, the long evolution from ancient, through feudal, and now bourgeois modes of production represents the means to develop the material conditions of communism as the

form of life which private property will in principle make possible through its disappearance. Private property is not an unnecessary, but a necessary stage, which only can come to an end when the real conditions for superseding it are produced through the development of productive forces. The development of human beings depends on the economic development of the forces of production, which in turn depends on the institution of private property. The latter passes through the various stages of the forms of production before supposedly arriving at a stage beyond private property. Since the period of production based on private property is antagonistic to the full development of individual human beings, it belongs to human prehistory which, accordingly, ends when private property ends. We are meant to infer that real human history begins beyond the institution of private property, since "the prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation" (XXIX, 264).

I have given such close attention to this preface since it is widely thought to provide a basic statement of Marx's later or mature view. The remainder of the preface consists in comments in which Marx reviews his collaboration with Engels, his previous writings, his studies in the British Museum, and his work as a journalist. Three points are important here. One is his reference to Engels's essay, "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy," whose influence is still present in Marx's 1859 book. Although more detailed, more informed, and deeper than anything Engels ever wrote, this book is merely a further critique of political economy. The second is the reference to *The German Ideology*, still unpublished at the time, which Marx now describes as "a critique of post-Hegelian philosophy" (XXIX, 264). The third, perhaps most surprising point is Marx's assertion that what he, in reference to Engels, now twice in the space of several lines calls "our conception [*unsere Ansicht*]" was initially provided in his little book on Proudhon. If he thought that the common view was a new economic theory, it would be plausible to contend that in the book on Proudhon Marx began to lay out in more detail than earlier writings a rival economic theory of modern industrial society. Yet this suggestion is also implausible in that his rival economic theory is continuous with the critique of Hegel there and elsewhere as well as with the continued critique of liberal political economy.

Capital: A Critique of Political Economy

After *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* we arrive at *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. In the years since the former was published in

1859, Marx was busy trying to earn a living. Despite his unsurpassed knowledge of modern industrial society, Marx, who was deeply devoted to his wife and children, was scarcely able to support his family. For a period of nine years his income was mainly derived from articles he wrote for the *Daily Tribune*. Charles A. Dana (1819–97), who was editor-in-chief, wrote a letter to indicate the respect in which he held Marx's journalism.⁴ But he was later forced by political events in the US to reduce Marx's contributions, which in turn brought Marx into severe financial difficulty.

In a letter to Engels at the beginning of the next year, he confessed that he simply does not know what to do.⁵ He was constantly asking for money from a variety of sources, including Engels, his relatives, his political colleagues, and so on. Later Marx found temporary relief through another job as a correspondent for the Vienna newspaper, *Die Presse*. In the meantime, he was carrying on his political activity and deepening his economic studies.

In 1862 problems arising from the Civil War in the US led the *Daily Tribune* to give up Marx as their London correspondent. The result was that Marx's already dire financial situation grew even worse. In April, Marx needed to pawn clothing, which was only redeemed in June, in order to eat. Yet he made progress in his economic research, filling no less than 13 notebooks during the year and drawing up a rough version of the first volume of *Capital*. In a letter at the end of the year to Dr. Ludwig Kugelmann (1828–1902), a Hannover gynecologist with left-wing political interests, he indicates that his study of economics is finished.⁶

Rather than publish what he had, Marx continued his studies in 1863, deepening his grasp of surplus value and returning to his earlier interest in technology and the history of technology, evident in the *Grundrisse*, even as his economic situation worsened. He also took the occasion to start studying calculus.

In May 1864 Marx's old friend Wilhelm Wolff (1809–64), a teacher and journalist from Breslau, who later became a communist, died. Wolff left a moderate sum of money in his will to Marx, who was able for a time to emerge from poverty. In gratitude Marx dedicated the first volume of *Capital* to him. Although for the moment out of the woods financially, Marx's health was now deteriorating. Unable to work on his economics, in June he started to study anatomy and physiology. In September Marx was invited to attend a meeting of an international working men's association, which led to the organization of the First International, with Marx as a member of the committee charged with drawing up the statutes and then later a declaration of principles.

In 1865 Marx was busy with political work. Early in the year, the German publisher Otto Meissner, situated in Hamburg, agreed to publish an

800-page manuscript on economics. The agreement was drawn up on January 30, and Marx received a contract on March 23 to deliver the text in May. On March 13 Marx complained to Engels that his work as head of the International Workingmen's Association was taking up a lot of his time. At the end of July, when Marx wrote to Engels to say that his inheritance from Wolff had been exhausted, he reported that he was nearly finished with his manuscript.⁷ Since his poor health impeded his economic research, he used the occasion to begin to study astronomy and, later during the year, agricultural chemistry. Yet he still managed to find time to complete what he thought was the definitive draft of *Capital*.

Marx wrote to Kugelmann in January⁸ that he expected to finish his book by March. But by February he was again too ill to work on the theoretical materials. In August his daughter Laura became engaged to Paul Lafargue (1842–1911), who later became his son in law and who founded the French branch of the International Workingmen's Association. Like any concerned father, Marx, who had sacrificed all his own prospects for revolution, asked Lafargue for information about his economic prospects in order to protect his daughter.⁹ In November Marx wrote to Engels that he would soon be sending *Capital* to the publisher, Meissner.¹⁰ In December he wrote again to Engels to say that the manuscript was already with the publisher who had not yet begun to print it.¹¹

Yet the manuscript, which was only finally finished in 1867, was still not ready. On April 2, 1867, Marx wrote to Engels that the manuscript was finally finished and that he wanted to take it to Hamburg to deliver to the publisher.¹² When Engels lent him the money, Marx went to Hamburg, and turned the manuscript over to Meissner on April 12. He used the occasion to stop off in Hannover for a visit with Kugelmann. Marx finally received the proofs of his book on May 5, 1867, his 49th birthday. Before returning to London, Marx talked to Meissner and promised to deliver the remaining volumes. On June 22, while he was still reading the proofs, Marx, in a comment about the work he put into writing the book, famously wrote: "I hope that the bourgeoisie will remember my carbuncles their whole life long."¹³ Marx composed the preface to *Capital* on July 25. The first press run of 1,000 copies was published on September 2.

The Publication History of *Capital*

The publication history of *Capital* is a good example of Marx's chronic inability, except in rare circumstances, to bring his work to completion. This

enormous work, as it has come down to us, consists of three fat volumes plus the additional three fat volumes comprising the *Theories of Surplus Value*. The first volume of *Capital* is the only one of these tomes actually published by Marx himself. The second and third volumes were largely ready in manuscript during the 1860s. Marx did not die until 1883, some 16 years after the appearance of the first one in 1867. But he was in poor health most of the time and he was unable to finish the rest of the work. Volumes two and three, which were never completed by Marx, were finally only edited and prepared for publication by Engels after Marx's death. Engels published the second volume in 1885 and the third volume in 1894. Engels died in 1895 without being able to complete the publication of Marx's literary remains. The projected fourth volume of *Capital* was quarried from manuscripts Marx wrote from 1861 to 1863 by Karl Kautsky between 1905 and 1910 and published in three volumes comprising more than 1,750 pages.¹⁴

The later publication history of *Capital* reflects a series of changes introduced into Marx's original publication by his own but also other hands. Marx actively worked on the second German edition of volume one of *Capital*, which appeared in 1872, and in which he introduced a series of changes. He also provided suggestions for the Russian version of the same volume, the first foreign translation, which was published in St. Petersburg in the same year. He contributed more heavily to the French translation, which appeared in serial form from 1872–5. According to the editors of the *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Engels himself prepared the translation of volume one of *Capital* into English, which appeared in 1887. In fact, as the editors of the *Collected Works* acknowledge, and as Engels indicates in his preface, the latter edited, hence is responsible for, the translation which was prepared by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Engels also edited the other German editions of the work, including the third German edition (1883) on which the English translation is based, and in which changes were made to reflect passages interpolated from the French edition of 1873, as well as in the fourth German edition in 1890.¹⁵

It is an open question as to how closely Engels's textual emendations correspond to Marx's own intentions. Since there is no way to verify his claims, we need to take Engels's word for the justification of the different changes he later introduced into the text. An interesting example of where the text is changed is the last sentence in *Capital* I, chapter XV, section 9, which reads: "By maturing the material conditions, and the combination on a social scale of the processes of production, it matures the contradictions and antagonisms of the capitalist form of production, and thereby provides, along with the elements for the formation of a new society, the forces for exploding the old

one" (XXXV, 504–5). This sentence is correctly translated from the text in the standard German edition (MEW XXIII, 526). In the *Collected Works* a footnote indicates it was added in the fourth German edition, which was edited by Engels after Marx's death.¹⁶ Another example concerns the approximately three pages which were added to some, but not to all, versions of the English edition to conform to the fourth German edition.¹⁷

Since the English translation is the basis of all further English editions – including the edition in the *Collected Works*, which simply reproduces the 1887 English text – it is clear that what is available in English, and in other languages as well, on occasion differs, often considerably, from the work Marx himself published. Changes concern even the number of chapters. Anyone who has ever looked at the German original knows it is divided into 25 chapters which, in English translation, have swollen to 33 chapters.¹⁸

Capital has long been widely acknowledged as Marx's masterpiece, his principal economic work, the *terminus ad quem* of his economic studies. It is an interesting question whether that judgment should be maintained after the appearance of the *Grundrisse*. Although the first volume of *Capital* is obviously closer to finished form than the *Grundrisse*, the latter has a scope that is not matched by the still enormously wide, but incomparably narrower sweep of the former.

According to the editors of the *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Marx spent forty years working on *Capital*, beginning with his first systematic studies of political economy in Paris in 1843.¹⁹ This suggests that his writings are contributions to the realization of a single project which culminates in *Capital*. Certainly, numerous ideas which appear in fragmentary or undeveloped form in earlier writings here receive detailed or more detailed treatment. Yet this enormous work is no more than a small, unfinished fragment of the much larger project Marx set for himself in the *Grundrisse*, in which the discussion of capital was intended to comprise no more than the first of six books.

Marx's style here is clear, certainly clearer than the vast majority of his other writings, as clear as, and certainly more interesting than in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. The pedagogical value is high, perhaps higher than in any of his other writings. In composing this book, he obviously made great efforts to be understood and to present his arguments in the simplest possible way. Continuing a practice which goes back to his earliest texts, Marx here cites abundantly from a wide variety of literature, often in the original language. As before, his great erudition, which by now has become simply enormous, shows itself in numerous references which, unlike certain earlier texts, such as the *Paris Manuscripts* or the *Grundrisse*, enlighten but do not obstruct the reading. Marx's attention is once again

focused on England, the most important country in the world market, where capitalism is most developed. The pages of the work are literally replete with concrete references, revealing detailed knowledge about virtually any imaginable aspect of English political economy.

The famous discussion of machinery in chapter 15 of volume one reflects a phenomenal grasp of the topic fully worthy of a scholarly treatise by itself. Although it is often ignored in scholarly works, it has arguably not been surpassed even in more recent times, when the history of technology and the philosophy of technology have become respected academic specialties.²⁰ After his failure to embark on an academic career, Marx rejected ordinary standards as merely symptomatic of a socially distorted form of society. But in *Capital* he produced a model study and critique of political economy, which fully exhibits all the normal criteria of an academic work on the highest level. An unusual feature which appears now is his frequent reference to, and quotation from, his previous writings. It is as if he already knew, when he published this volume, that its successors were unlikely to appear and he desired to "locate" it with respect to his already enormous corpus of writings.

Capital is a fantastically long book by any standard, without the *Theories of Surplus Value* – whose three books comprise the fourth volume of *Capital* – over 2,000 pages in German, well over 2,000 pages in the recent edition of the *Collected Works*, with the *Theories of Surplus Value* nearly 4,000 pages in German. In a study of Marx's economic theories, we would need to study *Capital*, where his economic views reach their highest and final level, in detail. In the present context, which stresses Marx's philosophy, discussion will be limited to some main themes in the first volume, which Marx himself published. I will begin with the unusual collection of prefatory materials, including no less than five prefaces and two afterwords to various editions, which are due both to Marx and to Engels.

Prefatory Materials to *Capital*

It will be useful to concentrate here on the preface to the first German edition and the afterword to the second German edition, which are important, while omitting commentary on the other prefatory materials, which mainly concern the details of subsequent editions and translation.

Marx begins the preface to the first German edition by noting that the work is a continuation of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, and that the first three chapters provide a restatement of themes of that work. After indicating that the discussion of commodities will provide the greatest

difficulty to understanding his theories, he justifies his concentration on English political economy since England provides the classic example – although he claims his theories apply to Germany as well – of the “development of social antagonisms that result from natural laws of capitalist production” (XXXV, 9). In other works, Marx has claimed that the tensions within capitalism tend to ripen. He now describes this situation as “tendencies working with iron necessity toward inevitable results” (XXXV, 9). This suggests, perhaps unwisely in view of the continued success of modern liberal economy since that time, that the evolution of capitalism must follow a prescribed path including its rise and then unavoidable fall. The main difference is that, since the industrial revolution began in England, capitalism is naturally more advanced there as well. Marx now describes his aim as “to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society” (XXXV, 10). Since the economic base is prior to everything else, and since modern society emerged from the industrial revolution, Marx’s intention, which he realizes to an astonishing degree, is to provide a general theory of modern industrial society in economic terms.

In prior writings, Marx has consistently based his theories on the Hegelian idea that human beings meet their needs through their activity within civil society. The theory of value sketched in writings since *The Poverty of Philosophy* presupposes that, as he put it in the *Grundrisse*, commodity value is a function of an abstraction, or the average amount of labor time necessary to produce a product, which only contingently corresponds to real labor time. Marx has consistently discussed the opposition created between capitalists and workers by the institution of private property. He now indicates that his interest does not lie in individuals as such, but rather only as they embody the different interests of modern industrial society. He is not concerned with a particular “capitalist” or “landlord,” since “individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests” (XXXV, 10). As if to underline this important point, Marx later repeats it in similar language in the chapter on exchange, where he notes that “the characters who appear on the economic stage are but the personifications of the economic relations that exist between them” (XXXV, 95).

As he did in the introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx closes the preface with a quotation from Dante. In the earlier book, after recalling a passage inscribed on the gates to hell which, he suggests, is appropriate also for the gates to science, he ended by suggesting that his theories be judged without prejudice and on their merits. When he completed this work in 1859, Marx was only 41, often ill but still in the prime of

life, still able to hope that his views would one day, perhaps even in his lifetime, receive serious consideration by those able to comprehend them. When he finished the preface to *Capital* only eight years later, Marx, a great thinker, whose importance cannot be questioned, had suffered the fate of all but the most unusual thinkers – Hegel here comes to mind – of being nearly unnoticed in his own time, or of being noticed for the wrong reasons. In the intervening period, he was no longer a young man, but although still only in his forties, often sick, increasingly unlikely to complete his great work. Here he again ends his book by indicating his willingness to submit to scientific opinion, which he distinguishes from public opinion. But this time he defiantly cites a different passage from Dante in which the great poet affirms his willingness to go his own way despite what others may say. It is not too much to infer that in citing this passage Marx was inviting less the judgment of his contemporaries than of history.

In the famous afterword to the second German edition, Marx makes three important points: about the difference between his own view and political economy, about his view of method, and about his relation to Hegel. All three points arise in the context of his account of the reception of the first volume of *Capital*. In his writings, Marx typically hesitates in specifying the nature of his own view while preferring to criticize others. In his early criticism of Hegel, he often emphasizes the scientific nature of his own approach – as we recall even on occasion claiming, for instance in his discussion of Proudhon, to be a German economist. Although Marxism has often styled Marx as a political economist, in his various critiques of political economy he does not, so far as I know, ever make that claim. Here he distinguishes between his view and political economy, whose last great representative, now as before, he regards as Ricardo.

According to Marx, the science of political economy presupposes for its existence a stable form of society rather than a transitory historical phase. Political economy is the theory of modern industrial society, or capitalism, which excludes basic social change. On the contrary, Marx's view of the development of social antagonisms within capitalism is based on the supposition that the emerging class struggle is transforming society. Ricardo was naive in thinking that the various antagonisms of modern industrial society (e.g., wages and profits, profits and rent, and so on) constitute a so-called law of nature. Why? Because his ahistorical viewpoint fails to note that society changes, often in basic ways. In this context, Marx makes the following general comment about political economy:

In so far as Political Economy remains within that horizon, in so far, i.e., as the capitalist regime is looked upon as the absolutely final form

of social production, instead of as a passing historical phase of its evolution, Political Economy can remain a science only so long as the class-struggle is latent or manifests itself only in isolated and sporadic phenomena. (XXXV, 14)

The second, related point arises in the course of Marx's remarks on the reviews of his book. In the methodological discussion in the introduction to the *Grundrisse* he emphasizes that what we know on the level of mind depends on the prior existence of an independent external world. The latter is only known through its reconstruction in the form of a concrete totality or totality of thoughts, but not through an abstract, self-developing concept outside, or what he calls observation and conception (N 101; XXVIII, 38). In a word, we acquire our familiarity with the independent world through an interaction, or series of interactions, in the course of which we build up a conception of it.

Marx is less concerned with formulating a law for a particular group of phenomena within a particular historical period than with understanding their development. In citing a lengthy passage from a Russian review of his book, which takes up nearly two pages in a text of only nine pages, Marx comments in an interesting way about this characterization of his work. He remarks that the description of what the writer takes to be his own method is in fact a description of the dialectical method. He then distinguishes between the method of presentation and the method of investigation, or inquiry. It is correct to analyze the material before determining the inner connections and, only then, what he calls its actual movement. His point is that claims about social phenomena require close empirical study prior to and before formulating generalizations. According to Marx, "if this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere *a priori* construction" (XXXV, 19).

Marx's wording here easily creates misunderstanding. He is obviously not espousing the reflection theory of knowledge pioneered for Marxism by Engels. He is also not saying that knowledge in fact requires that mind literally reflect an independent world. Were that a necessary condition of knowledge, then there would be none. He is rather saying, as concerns the ideal grasp of the empirical material, that we understand the object as if it were an *a priori* construction of our making. The point here as in the *Grundrisse* remains that real knowledge requires us to grasp what we take to be the mind-independent external world in the only way this is possible: its reconstruction on the level of mind.

This insight is relevant to the third point as concerns Marx's conception of

his relation to Hegel. Marx obviously accepts a form of the dialectical method he attributes to Hegel. Here as earlier he remains a Hegelian while continuing to criticize Hegel. In the *Grundrisse* Marx objected to the view he misattributed to Hegel; that is, that the object could be regarded as the product of a self-developing concept isolated from observation. He now repeats a version of this objection in claiming that his own dialectical method is the opposite of Hegel's. According to Marx, his great German predecessor is precisely guilty of transforming an abstract idea into the self-developing subject, hence of neglecting empirical study of the object.

Marx, who insists on empirical study, depicts his own version of the dialectical method, in Feuerbachian language, as the opposite of Hegel's. Hegel errs in taking the idea as the subject from which the empirical object derives, whereas the proper approach is to hold that our ideas depend on the empirical study of the independent world. The ideal is nothing other than the full grasp of the external world on the level of thought. In an important passage, Marx writes:

My dialectical method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing other than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought. (XXXV, 19)

After making this point, Marx closes the afterword to the second German edition with further comments on his critical relation to Hegel. On the one hand, he reaffirms the obvious in declaring himself a Hegelian, which here seems to mean that he is committed to a form of dialectic. On the other, he holds, for the reasons just given, that Hegel's view of dialectic is a mystification. In this context he makes the famous remark about dialectic, which is frequently cited: "With him it [i.e., dialectic] is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell" (XXXV, 19).

Marx ends this important text with a remark on the practical importance of dialectic for his own vision of modern industrial society. In much the same way as in the *Grundrisse*, in the preface to the first German edition of this book he noted a tendency for the internal contradictions of capitalism to develop. Marx now suggests that in its Hegelian, or supposedly mystical, form dialectic only appears to explain the social context. If Hegel's dialectic fails to

produce a real explanation, a dialectical approach is not disqualified. Correctly understood, dialectic is the tool which enables us to see that the social context is not stable, but includes its necessary transformation. It follows that dialectic is, as Marx claims, critical and revolutionary. Marx supports this claim by coming back to the idea of economic cycles, which he stated very clearly as early as the *Grundrisse*. His point is once again that the periodic crises of modern industrial society are slowly gathering toward a general crisis, now only in its preliminary stage. Yet this claim seems to be more a profession of faith, even a philosophical deduction, than based on empirical evidence of any kind.

Capital

The main text of book one of *Capital* is divided into eight parts. Part one, which is entitled "Commodities and money," restates material already covered in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Although there are numerous parallels, the two expositions cannot merely be superimposed one on the other since there are many changes of emphasis. As Marx notes in passing, some points scarcely hinted at earlier are worked out in detail now and others earlier discussed in detail are now barely mentioned. These changes are to be expected in the writing of anyone who continues to reflect on and to rework his position, something Marx never ceased to do.

The first part is divided into three chapters, which respectively concern Commodities, Exchange, and Money, or the circulation of commodities. As he did in the earlier book, Marx begins *Capital* through a detailed discussion of commodities. In comparison with *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* the exposition has been much improved. Gone now are the distracting sections on the history of the theories of value, which will later reappear in gigantic form in Marx's posthumously published *Theories of Surplus Value*, and of money, which earlier distracted from the systematic exposition. As a direct result, the discussion reads more smoothly.

The account of commodities repairs a lacuna in Marx's writings prior to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* while continuing a shift in emphasis. The term "commodity" has occurred much earlier in Marx's writings. For instance, in the *Paris Manuscripts* in a passage on the rent of land, after a long quotation from Smith Marx remarks that unrestricted competition ruins the landowning aristocracy in transforming land into a commodity (see B 113; III, 265). This term, which occurs rarely until the *Grundrisse*, occurs very frequently there. Although he points out in that work that the

commodity is the first way in which bourgeois wealth appears (N 881), he does not there make systematic use of the concept as he does here and then in *Capital*. Marx now literally constructs his theory upon the concept of the commodity which, for this reason, becomes the central concept, the conceptual basis, of his view of modern industrial society.

In recentring his account of political economy on the commodity, Marx completes a shift in emphasis in his writings. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel stresses the impact of modern liberal economy everywhere in society, for instance concerning the family through remarks on family capital (*das Vermögen der Familie*, §§170–2) and the division created by civil society between the individual and his family (§238). Marx's early texts on Hegel criticize him for neglecting the human dimension which is central to Marx's account of philosophy and economics in the *Paris Manuscripts*. In later texts Marx increasingly emphasizes the way that modern economics forms a system, which can be studied as a science. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, although Marx has not forgotten the effect of capitalism on individuals, he totally refocuses his discussion from the individual to the commodity as the central element of a society based on private property. It is only in *Capital* where, through detailed studies of the effect of capitalism on individuals, that the former theme returns with a vengeance.

The reason for beginning with an analysis of commodities is clear: Marx's interest does not lie in modern industrial society as such, nor in the abstract, and even less as a static, self-preserving, homeostatic system; it rather lies in the way modern industrial society functions and evolves with respect to the realization of human goals for human beings. Capitalism is defined by the institution of private ownership of the means of production, or private property. But the condition for capitalism to function is the exchange process based on the exchange of commodities.

Marx begins his exposition of commodities and money in recalling his earlier claim that social wealth takes the form, as he writes in citing himself, of "an immense accumulation of commodities" (XXXV, 45). What is a commodity (*die Ware*)? Basically, it is a tangible external object which satisfies a human need of whatever kind. Now everything useful, that is useful to satisfy a need, can be regarded from the different perspectives of quality or quantity. On this basis, Marx now reintroduces a distinction between use-value and exchange value, which was already known to Aristotle.²¹ A thing is useful because it has a use-value, or serves a purpose. "The utility of a thing makes it a use-value" (XXXV, 46). The use-value is intrinsic to the commodity. The exchange value, on the contrary, which is extrinsic to a thing, is a relative, or variable, value which can be had for a thing, be it another thing

or money. Since use-value, which is qualitative, cannot be expressed in quantitative terms, "exchange value is the only form in which the value of commodities can manifest itself or be expressed" (XXXV, 48).

In order to understand the value of commodities, Marx turns to labor. His central insight, which is anticipated by Locke, Hegel, and others, is that labor confers value on products. Since labor, which produces use-value, depends on preexisting materials which themselves have value, it is not the only source of value.

Modern science arose when, through certain simplifying assumptions, a way was found to apply mathematics to nature. Marx similarly simplifies the calculation of economic value in suggesting that in all cases it can be represented as a multiple of average labor power. "The labour . . . that forms the substance of value, is homogeneous human labor, expenditure of one uniform labor power" (XXXV, 49). In other words, the value of an object is "the amount of labor socially necessary, or the labor-time socially necessary for its production" (XXXV, 49). Things which take the same time to produce should have the same exchange value.

The view that value is calculated in terms of labor is stated earlier in different ways by other writers. As formulated by Marx, it is an application of the Hegelian view that in the process of production the work of individuals is "crystallized" or "objectified." The objectification of the work of different individuals in products is the same in all commodities. In the *Grundrisse* Marx drew a distinction between labor and labor capacity. In developing this distinction, he pointed out that labor is measured by labor time. More or less labor time is required to produce different commodities, such as sewing machines or cars. Yet in all cases exchange value is a function of labor time.

Different types of use value are the result of different types of labor. Productive activity creates use value. Marx, who acknowledges that human productive activity can take many forms, both qualitatively and quantitatively, considers it in the first place as human labor in general.

In order to understand the form of exchange value, Marx relates it to money. He distinguishes between the relative value of the materials which go into making a thing, and the thing, which has a value calculable in what he calls equivalent form, or monetary units. Value is created by the congealed, or concretized, form of human labor power, which does not itself have any value, but acquires it in taking the form of an object. "Human labor power in motion, or human labor, creates value, but is not itself value. It becomes value only in its congealed state, when embodied in the form of some object" (XXXV, 61). In a word, labor power is accumulated, or stored up in, or again given concrete form as the product.

Since one commodity can be exchanged for another, commodities have equivalent form. The underlying idea, that is, that particularity is lost in the way that the value of one commodity is calculated on the basis of another, depends on a concept of value. In a pertinent remark on Aristotle, Marx notes that the Greek philosopher was prevented from arriving at a concept of value. Although he was aware of the value of commodities, since he lived in a society founded on slavery, he could not grasp "the secret of the expression of value, namely, that all kinds of labor are equal and equivalent" (XXXV, 70).

In rapid succession, Marx makes a number of further comments on value. He points out that all products have use-value, although it is only at a certain stage in social evolution that "a product becomes a commodity" (XXXV, 72). The social character of human labor can however be represented in abstract, average form.

The general value-form, which represents all products of labor as mere congelations of undifferentiated human labor, shows by its very structure that it is the social résumé of the world of commodities. That form consequently makes it indisputably evident that in the world of commodities the character possessed by all labor of being *human* labor constitutes its specific social character. (XXXV, 78)

So far, as he suggested in the preface to the first German edition, Marx has been scrupulously following the exposition in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. With respect to the earlier discussion, he now innovates in describing what he calls the fetishism of commodities.

This innovation occurs in "Section 4: The fetishism of commodities and the secret thereof." The word "fetishism" is from the Portuguese word *feitiço*, meaning artificial, and the Latin *facticius*, meaning "factitious." It is related to "fetish," or the name given to the cult objects of so-called primitive civilizations, hence any natural or artificial object which is supposed to have special powers. "Fetishism" has the meanings of "a religion of fetishes, an irrational devotion, or the pathological displacement of erotic or libidinal impulses to some object." Marx extends the term from its more usual anthropological, religious, or psychological domains in an economic direction. He uses "fetishism" in the context of the basic difference between two forms of society in which the process of production either dominates or is dominated by human beings.

The concept of fetishism continues and develops the analysis of alienation. In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx argued that, through a kind of role reversal, the worker comes to depend on the object he produces, or is even enslaved by it (B 123; III, 273). In developing this idea, Marx argues that in

exchange value, through which the value of different commodities can be compared quantitatively, an in-principle social relation between individuals appears in very different, perverted form, as a relation between things (XXIX, 275).

In *Capital* Marx analyzes what he earlier called the perverted relation between things under the heading of the fetishism of commodities. He starts by affirming that the commodity is mysterious before repeating his conviction that, as he has often urged in previous writings, the relation between producers takes the form of a relation between products (XXXV, 82). Producers do not come into contact before the exchange of commodities. It follows that the social character of the labor which goes into production is manifest only in exchange. More precisely, it is directly manifest through the products exchanged and indirectly through their producers. As he points out, there is absolutely no connection between the value of commodities as products of labor and their physical attributes. What is mysterious, as he writes in a famous passage, is "a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (XXXV, 83).

Marx's claim can be understood if we recall that, in exchange, we presuppose homogeneous human labor (XXXV, 84). This labor converts each and every product into "a social hieroglyphic" (XXXV, 85), while at the same time the monetary form of the world of commodities conceals instead of disclosing the social character of private labor and the relations between producers. Marx has in mind the fact that in a society dominated by the productive process, which we do not control but which rather controls us, its real nature is concealed. Now this is not the case in, say, feudal society, where there is barter or payment in kind, since there is no commodity-exchange. And it will not be the case in a society of free individuals, where the social relations of the individual producers and their relations to their work and their products will supposedly be straightforward.

Marx's point seems to be that our ability to think correctly about the economic process depends on being able to distance ourselves from its control of us. For the process of production only loses its mystical aspect when we emerge from the economic yoke to work according to our own plan. Marx illustrates his claim by referring to the classical school of political economy, which reaches its high point in Ricardo. According to Marx, the classical school has so far sought but failed to understand the concept of value, since it has never grasped the relation between labor as use-value and labor as exchange value. This remark reaffirms Marx's conviction that a proper understanding of the difference between use-value and exchange value is key to understanding modern industrial society.

Chapter 2, which is very short, discusses "Exchange" by proceeding from the object, or commodity, to its guardian, or owner. Marx has earlier considered the labor which creates use-values in simplified fashion as homogeneous labor power. He now extends the same courtesy to those implicated in the economic process, all of whom are fictitiously considered as a function of their respective roles. Marx is not denying that, say, Henry Ford played a specific role in the creation of the assembly line. Yet what a particular individual does in a particular situation is irrelevant to the fact that that person functions in the general economic framework. The reason is rather that "the characters who appear on the economic stage are but the personifications of the economic relations that exist between them" (XXXV, 95).

The longer third chapter studies "Money, or the Circulation of Commodities" in some detail. In three sections, Marx distinguishes between the measure of value, the medium of circulation, and money. Marx, who assumes that gold is the so-called money-commodity, or again the universal measure of value, immediately observes that it only functions in this way because the value of commodities is commensurable, or expressible as a function of what he calls realized human labor. The value of a commodity is its price, for instance so many units of precious metal, which expresses the quantity of human labor necessary to produce the thing. There is a difference between the measure of value, or "the socially recognized incarnation of human labor," and the standard of price, which is nothing other than a certain quantity, or "fixed weight of metal" (XXXV, 107). The price is just another name for the labor stored up in the commodity.

The account of the medium of circulation considers in order the metamorphosis of commodities, the currency of money, and coins and symbols of value. In remarks on the first point, Marx studies inconsistencies which arise from considering commodities as such and as money, more precisely what he calls "the change of form or metamorphosis of commodities which effectuates the social circulation of matter" (XXXV, 114). He investigates the changes through the formula $C-M-C$ in which C = commodity and M = money.

In general, the process breaks down into $C-M$, which Marx calls the first metamorphosis, or sale, and $M-C$, the second metamorphosis, or purchase. The sale obviously depends on the fact that use-value is of interest to a potential customer and the division of labor. "The division of labor converts the products of labor into a commodity, and thereby makes necessary its further conversion into money" (XXXV, 117). In a word, as capitalists, those who own the commodities exploit those who do not in their capacity to "appropriate the produce of the labor of others, by alienating that of their own labor" (XXXV, 118).

The first transformation of the commodity into money brings about the second transformation of money into a commodity. Since for every purchase there is a sale, the money which results from it becomes available for a further purchase. The so-called "metamorphosis of a commodity," that is a sale followed by a purchase, makes up "a circular movement, a circuit" (XXXV, 121). This circuit is merely one among many which, taken together, compose "the circulation of commodities" (XXXV, 122). The difference between barter and the circulation of commodities lies in the fact that no seller is obliged to become a buyer. In a word, unlike direct barter, in the case of circulation, a direct identity does not obtain. "Circulation bursts through all restrictions as to time, place, and individuals, imposed by direct barter . . . by splitting up . . . the direct identity that in barter does exist between the alienation of one's own and the acquisition of some other man's product" (XXXV, 123).

In turning to the currency of money, Marx notes that the circuit made by commodities is not replicated by a monetary circuit. In fact the circulation of money, which appears to bring about the circulation of commodities, depends upon it, and not conversely. Marx goes on to show that the quantity of money in circulation at any given time is a function of the sum of the values of the commodities and the speed at which money changes hands.

The remarks on coins and symbols of value draws attention to the different forms they can take. Various remarks about the difference between the nominal and real weight of coins, and the relation of paper money to gold, are self-evident.

The section on money covers hoarding, means of payment, and universal money. Money is, as has continually been stressed, "the commodity that functions as a measure of value" (XXXV, 140). Hoarding, it is obvious, occurs when money is withdrawn from circulation for any reason, for instance through "the greed for gold" (XXXV, 142). Marx waxes lyrical in noting, as he has already done in the *Paris Manuscripts*, that literally everything is convertible into gold.

In discussing the means of payment, Marx considers the situation in which sellers extend credit, buyers take on debt, and the means of payment is monetary. In practice, then, the sale and the purchase of a given commodity are no longer simultaneous, since money for a thing is due at a later date. Money also functions outside the circulation of commodities, for instance in contracts, rents, taxes, and the like. This leads to the need to accumulate money for payment at specified times.

The remarks on universal money, which close the chapter, are out of date. Marx lived in a time when there was still no accepted international

monetary standard, such as the American dollar, Japanese yen, or Euro. Given that restriction, he is correct to say that in the international realm, money takes the form of bullion.

Until now, with some additional material, the discussion has generally followed *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Beginning with part two, "The transformation of money into capital," Marx goes beyond the earlier book in further developing his view of modern industrial society. This part successively studies "The general formula for capital" (chapter 4), "Contradictions in the general formula of capital" (chapter 5), and "The buying and selling of capital" (chapter 6). In chapter 4, Marx begins to consider the accumulation of capital, a topic which has been in abeyance, lurking on the horizon as it were, ever since the important discussion of surplus value in the *Grundrisse*. There he developed the idea of surplus value as unpaid labor. Here he draws the consequence of that idea in showing that the fact that commodity exchange produces surplus value automatically leads to the accumulation of capital, the inherent aim of capitalism.

Marx begins by pointing out that capital takes the form of money, as opposed to landed property. There is a distinction in kind between mere money and money which is capital. As in previous writings, Marx distinguishes between the circulation of commodities, which are transformed into money ($C-M-C$), and the transformation of money into commodities ($M-C-M$). He now innovates in writing the latter formula as $M-C-M'$, where M' is greater than M , in order to reflect surplus value, which is defined as the increase in value in the circulation of money. "This increment or excess over the original value I call 'surplus value'" (XXXV, 161). In the movement through the exchange process, the original sum of money is increased, hence converted into capital. Capitalism focuses on the circulation of capital as money, which constantly increases in this manner as an end in itself. Since money constantly begets more money, capital is self-expanding, constantly adding to its value through the generation of surplus value, which increases the original value. "For the movement, in the course of which it adds surplus value, is its own movement, its expansion, therefore, is automatic expansion. Because it is value, it has acquired the occult quality of being able to add value to itself. It brings forth living offspring, or, at the least, lays golden eggs" (XXXV, 154). In short, value begets value, since in and through the circulation of capital as money, the generation of surplus value in the form of an increase in money leads to the accumulation of capital.

In itself, this idea is very old, as Marx shows in a lengthy footnote to Aristotle, who more than two thousand years ago already distinguished between *oeconomic*, roughly the art of making a living, and *chremastic*, or engaging in

trade with the idea of absolute wealth. In Marx's account, Aristotle was already aware that the circulation of money through commodity exchange leads on to riches (XXXV, 163n.).

Although surplus value originates in circulation, this does not explain why it originates. Marx attends to this puzzle in discussing contradictions in the general formula of capital in the next chapter, where he argues that capital is not produced by, but only exists in, circulation. There is, he suggests, much confusion on this score. Destutt de Tracy thinks that in exchange both the buyer and seller profit, and Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–80), the French philosopher, holds that each gives less than he receives. Marx objects that the creation of surplus value cannot be explained on the supposition that commodities are sold for more than they are worth or bought for less than they are worth. He further holds that when equivalents are exchanged, surplus value does not result.

The solution to the puzzle will require lengthy discussion throughout most of the rest of this volume. Marx makes a start in the next chapter in his analysis of labor power. We recall that in the *Grundrisse* he introduced a distinction between the worker, or laborer, and labor power. He now considers labor power with respect to use-value. His suggestion is that surplus value is the result of the difference between the sum paid for labor power, which creates use-value in producing a commodity, and its exchange value. Labor power is by definition what is exercised to produce use-value. In a key passage on productive activity already cited, and which Marx now reproduces (XXXV, 178n.), Hegel notes that the worker can alienate the labor power he "owns" by crystallizing it in his work.²² In Marx's terminology, labor power is available for sale as a commodity which is valuable because it produces other, more valuable commodities. People are impelled to sell their labor power for the simple reason that, in order to live, much less to live well, they require a means of subsistence, hence must meet such basic needs as food, clothing, and shelter.

The accumulation of capital depends on the production of surplus value, whose real presupposition is the existence of commodities. Surplus value is not produced in a barter economy, in which products are directly exchanged for other products or services but not for money. It is produced only in an economy in which use-value and exchange value are separated, thereby transforming products into commodities to be exchanged for money. What the worker has to offer, his only commodity, is his labor power, whose price is fixed by what he needs to continue to subsist. "The value of labor power resolves itself into the value of a definite quantity of the means of subsistence" (XXXV, 182). The wages the capitalist pays for labor power are fixed

before production. The value of the commodity, or product to be exchanged, is a function of the use-value produced. The worker and capitalist come together out of their own interests in that the worker sells his labor power in order to meet his subsistence needs and the capitalist buys the same labor power which is for sale, for which he pays wages or a salary, with the idea of selling the commodity for more than his costs in virtue of the surplus value.

In parts three, four, and five Marx discusses types of surplus value, beginning, in part three with "the production of absolute surplus value." He devotes a substantial amount of text – some 130 pages – to this theme, and even more – almost 200 pages – to relative surplus value, but barely more than 25 pages to the intersection of absolute surplus value and relative surplus value.

Marx begins by pointing out that the capitalist buys labor power in order to use it to produce use value in the form of a commodity. He initially considers the labor process in independence of the social conditions under which it occurs. As he has consistently done in his writings, he depicts the labor process as an interaction between individuals and with nature. In the labor process in general, labor transforms nature into use value. Marx sums up his view thus: "The labor process, resolved as above into its simple elementary factors, is human action with a view to the production of use-values, appropriation of natural substances to human requirements" (XXXV, 194). The product of the production process, or use-value, goes to the capitalist. Examination of labor insofar as it creates value concerns mere quantity unrelated to quality. For purposes of calculating the amount of value, it is necessary to reduce skilled labor to so-called average social labor.

In the next chapter, under the heading of "Constant capital and variable capital," Marx addresses the question of how the means of production, which are used up in the process, are transferred so to speak to the product. An example might be that machines wear out and need to be replaced. It is obvious that an increase in labor increases total value in preserving the original value, say, of the factory including its machines. Value lies in the objects, and the means of production, such as machines, do not contribute to use-value more than they lose in being operated. In the process, the use-value of the machines is consumed, or used up, by the worker who adds value to the product. On this basis, Marx claims that value is not used up or reproduced, since "it is rather preserved" (XXXV, 217). It follows that "surplus value" is measured by "the difference between the value of the product and the value of the elements consumed in the formation of that product, in other words of the means of production and the labor power" (XXXV, 219). As concerns capital, constant capital refers to the means of production, including raw

materials, and tools, and variable capital refers to the labor power, or wages and salaries.

The importance of this distinction emerges in consideration of "The rate of surplus value" in the following chapter, where Marx immediately describes capital C as composed of c , or constant capital, and v , or variable capital. Surplus value, which results from the variation of v , is represented as $v + v'$, where v' is the increment or increase in v . This same distinction can be understood as a function of labor time. The latter includes necessary labor time, or the time a person must work to meet subsistence needs, and surplus labor time. During the latter, the worker creates surplus value for the capitalist which, "for the capitalist," as Marx sarcastically writes, "has all the charms of a creation out of nothing" (XXXV, 226). It follows that the rate of creation of surplus value is represented by the ratio between surplus labor and necessary labor. Obviously, the owner of the means of production has every interest in prolonging the working day in order to maximize profit. Marx illustrates this point through a reference to an Oxford economics professor, Nassau W. Senior (1790–1864), who in 1837 argued that at the time, when a mill worker could not be obliged to work more than 12 hours during the week and 9 hours on Saturday, "the whole net profit is derived from the last hour."²³

With this example as a lead-in, Marx next turns to an account of "The working day" in chapter 10. This long discussion (some 70 pages) rehearses the rather dreadful conditions of labor, particularly child labor, which prevailed during the period. In *The Wealth of Nations* Smith notes that poverty is very unfavorable to bringing up children.²⁴ Marx goes a great deal farther. In a striking passage, he writes that "Capital is dead labor, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks" (XXXV, 241). There is no natural limit to the working day. As the capitalist profits by its extension, and as the worker only represents a source of labor time, the capitalist has every interest in extending the working day. Marx lines up a whole series of cases taken from official documents which describe how in England during the 1860s children as young as 9 or 10 were roused from their sleep as early as two, three, or four in the morning only to work until midnight. In our day, the equivalent might be the conditions of little children making Nike sneakers or other items of apparel in third and fourth world countries. Marx studies these appalling conditions in detail in sections devoted to "Branches of English industry without legal limits to exploitation," "Day and night work," and so on. As a system directed toward the increase of capital, from the perspective of the capitalist there should be no end to the working day and the relation to the worker is merely a relation

to him as a source of labor power useful to increase value. As Marx sarcastically remarks, rather than the peak of human progress, the result of the industrial revolution which established modern industrial society is nothing like the liberation of working men and women. "It takes centuries ere the 'free' laborer, thanks to the development of capitalist production, agrees, i.e., is compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessities of life, his birthright for a mess of pottage" (XXXV, 276–7). The wider point is that the aim of capitalism is merely "the production of surplus value, or the extraction of surplus labor" (XXXV, 302). Literally everything else is subordinated to that aim.

Marx ends this section with a short chapter on "Rate and mass of surplus value." To simplify, he has so far supposed that the value of labor power is a constant. Now he points out that the amount of surplus value varies as a function of the amount of the variable component which represents living labor power, hence the extent of the role of the worker in the production process. This suggests that the capitalist has every interest in increasing and not in decreasing the exploitation of the worker in order to increase surplus value.

The long discussion of absolute surplus value in part three is followed by an even longer discussion of the "Production of relative surplus value" in part four. The latter is divided into four chapters, of which the last, the long account of some 130 pages on "Machinery and modern industry," is as long as the entire earlier discussion of absolute surplus value.

Marx opens this part of the book in taking up "The concept of relative surplus value" in the context of the question, which must occur to anyone who owns private property, such as a car, about how surplus value can be increased. If the length of the working day cannot be increased – we recall that when Marx was writing it was absurdly long by present standards in the industrialized West – the only practical alternative is to curtail the amount of necessary labor time, or the time needed to meet subsistence needs, for instance through technological innovation. In this connection, Marx distinguishes between absolute surplus value, which is produced by lengthening the working day, and relative surplus value, which is due to reducing necessary labor time. The result of technological innovation is to increase the productiveness of labor, hence to increase surplus value. The solution to the question, hence, lies not in shortening the working day, but in shortening the working time. This has the double effect of making commodities cheaper, but also of increasing their surplus value.

Now, since relative surplus value increases in direct proportion to the development of the productiveness of labor, while, on the other hand, the value of commodities diminishes in the same proportion; since one and the same process cheapens commodities and augments the surplus value contained in them; we have here the solution of the riddle: why does the capitalist, whose sole concern is the production of exchange value, continually strive to depress the exchange value of commodities? (XXXV, 325)

Having identified the concept of relative surplus value, Marx addresses aspects of its production in a trio of chapters, beginning with a relatively rapid account of "Cooperation," followed by a longer one on "Division of labor and manufacture," and ending in a very detailed account of "Machinery and modern industry." Capitalist production, as he notes, begins when a large number of workers are brought together. In principle the number of workers affects neither the rate of surplus value nor the degree of exploitation. But when individuals work together, the time required for meeting subsistence needs, or necessary labor time, diminishes. Marx expresses this point in writing that "When the laborer cooperates systematically with others, he strips off the fetters of his individuality, and develops the capabilities of his species" (XXXV, 334).

Marx pursues this theme in the detailed discussion of "Division of labor and manufacture." His interest in division of labor is a consistent theme in his writings since the *Paris Manuscripts*. In that text, he equated division of labor with private property, on which it depends, and described it with exchange as two main forms of perceptible alienation (B 187; III, 321). In *The German Ideology* the idea of the many-sided individual who will supposedly exist in communism is understood as the antithesis of the division of labor which prevents such development (GI 53; V, 47).

Manufacture, the form of cooperation based on division of labor, arises by bringing together representatives of different crafts or when many people each perform the same work. In division of labor, the process of production is decomposed into separate steps through a form of cooperation. Obviously, repetition of a single operation saves time in the production process. There is a further difference between merely putting parts together, as in watch-making, or in perfecting a product through a series of steps, as in cabinet-making.

Marx touches rapidly on the division of labor in manufacture and on the social division of labor. Division of labor, which arises naturally and spontaneously, for instance in the family, is enormously developed through the separation between town and country – a point already made in *The German*

Ideology – in the development of commodity exchange. “The foundation of every division of labor that is well developed, and brought about by the exchange of commodities, is the separation between town and country” (XXXV, 357). Large-scale manufacture typical of modern industrial society requires the prior development of division of labor. In passing, Marx now comments on the difference between modern industrial society, which tends toward the organization of society as a giant factory, and what, in the *Grundrisse*, he earlier described as the Asiatic form of production – “this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies” (XXXV, 363–4) – which merely tends to reproduce itself without social change.

He ends this chapter with remarks on capitalist manufacture, which requires as many workers as are prescribed by the prior division of labor. As he did in the *Paris Manuscripts*, he now remarks that the simple restriction of a worker to repetitive movements converts him into a mere beast. “While simple cooperation leaves the mode of working by the individual for the most part unchanged, manufacture thoroughly revolutionizes it, and seizes labor power by its very roots. It converts the laborer into a crippled monstrosity, by forcing his detail dexterity at the expense of a world of productive capabilities and instincts” (XXXV, 365). The point is that the capitalist, who is interested only in profit, is not interested in the effect of the productive process on the worker. This is also the case for political economy, which sees in division of labor a way to increase production at lower prices. Division of labor is, of course, very old. It already forms the basis, as Marx notes, of Plato’s division of society into classes. Marx closes by noting the difference between the modern concern with division of labor as an incentive to quantity and the ancient interest in this approach as such an incentive.

The very long chapter on “Machinery and modern industry” works out in detail a theme raised for the first time in the *Grundrisse*. Here and throughout the book, indeed throughout his many writings, Marx hammers away at the point that the progress of modern industrial society is dearly paid for in the sacrifice exacted of the workers, who literally give up everything which characterizes the good life and even life itself for others in pursuit of capital. He begins by citing J. S. Mill (1806–73), the English utilitarian philosopher and political economist, to the effect that it is doubtful that machinery has ever lightened anyone’s work. As Marx notes, Mill misses the point, which is rather to produce and to increase the production of surplus value.

Since the industrial revolution begins with the transformation of tools into machines, Marx begins his discussion with the development of machinery. The result of the introduction of machines is that instead of using tools, the worker is transformed into a mere appendage of the machine, which in

effect takes his place. "The machine, which is the starting point of the industrial revolution, supersedes the workman, who handles a single tool, by a mechanism operating with a number of similar tools" (XXXV, 379). Machines not only replace human beings. They also do human jobs which require simple repetitive motions better than people can and in ways which are applicable to many different tasks. Watt's steam-engine, for instance, was not destined for a single use but for widespread use in industry in general. Marx says that a machine can be characterized as "a huge automaton" (XXXV, 384), what would now be called a robot. As for people, division of labor also arises among machines. The technical foundation of modern industry lies in the invention of different machines to perform various specialized tasks. In virtue of the interdependency of various branches of industry, changes in one are interconnected with changes in others. "A radical change in the mode of production in one sphere of industry involves a similar change in other spheres" (XXXV, 386). Marx gives as an example the way that progress in spinning cotton led to the invention of the cotton gin to separate the seeds from the fiber in order to increase production. More generally, the transition from manufacturing to modern industry exhibits the wholesale replacement of workers by machines as the fundamental source of production, to which people are then subordinated.

Marx has continually stressed the Hegelian idea that a person produces use-value at the same time as work is "congealed" or "crystallized" in a product. He now maintains that in displacing human beings the machine only increases the amount of work that can be accomplished, hence value which can be created. He illustrates this point through the way in which a steam plow does as much work as 66 men in the same time and for a fraction of the cost.

It is clear that the introduction of machinery is often harmful to the individual worker. One problem is that it increases exploitation by decreasing wages and forcing everyone in the family to work. Another is that in decreasing the number of workers it simply increases the length of the working day for those who remain, which in turn increases profits. Still another consequence is to intensify labor. Intensified labor, with a greater rate of production, is substituted for longer labor, for instance "by increasing the speed of the machinery, and by giving the workman more machinery to tend [*sic*]" (XXXV, 415). Marx cites various authorities to show that the shortening of working hours in 1844 and 1850 intensified work, resulting in a further diminution of the health of the workers.

Turning now to the factory, Marx observes that the introduction of machinery tends to replace skilled workers by unskilled ones, who merely tend

the machines through repetitive motions. In this context, he repeats a point he has made before in the context of the factory: "By means of its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labor confronts the laborer, during the labor process, in the shape of capital, of dead labor, that dominates, and pumps dry, living labor power" (XXXV, 426).

It is not surprising that the introduction of machines met with widespread resistance by working people, for which Marx gives several examples. The development of capital through machinery runs against the interest of the worker who loses his job if he is unable to sell his labor power. Introduction of machines simply displaces a whole series of jobs, driving down wages, often below the subsistence level. "History discloses no tragedy more horrible than the gradual extinction of the English hand-loom weavers, an extinction that spread over several decades, and finally sealed in 1838" (XXXV, 434). The result is that human progress is bought at the price of the sacrifice of human beings. "The instrument of labor strikes down the laborer" (XXXV, 435).

Some economists argue that the introduction of machinery frees up capital to employ workers elsewhere. But Marx contends that displaced workers only find new work through the investment of new capital. The failure to recognize this fact is merely the failure to acknowledge that the introduction of machinery is at best a mixed blessing. Again driving home the same point, Marx writes that the introduction of machinery, which is "a victory of man over the forces of Nature . . . in the hands of capital, makes man the slave of these forces; since in itself it increases the wealth of the producers, but in the hands of capital, makes them paupers" (XXXV, 444).

A further problem, which derives from the expansion of production, is the exposure to cyclical business crises which Marx has earlier examined in the *Grundrisse*. Here he notes that the factory system allows overproduction, which in turn produces pressure to diminish wages in order to sell commodities more cheaply, for instance in the cotton industry.

Machinery undoes cooperation in trades such as needle-making. Skilled workers are replaced by unskilled workers, or cheap labor. Marx provides numerous concrete examples drawn from English statistics. Yet at last the tendency of machines to reduce the price of labor runs up against insuperable natural obstacles. In England, this was the introduction of factory legislation to protect workers, which he sees as "that first conscious and methodical reaction of society against the spontaneously developed form of the process of production" (XXXV, 483). He describes what he regards as the timid effort to combine elementary education with work in the factory, and points to the need to introduce technical training. The introduction of fac-

tory legislation is a mixed blessing. In requiring general standards, it only hastens the complete transformation of society along lines ruled everywhere by capital. On economic grounds, the result is to simply sweep away small industries in favor of large ones, increase the concentration of capital, reinforce the factory system, and so on. In agriculture, for instance, where the effect is perhaps greater than elsewhere, the introduction of machinery "annihilates the peasant, that bulwark of the old society, and replaces him by the wage-laborer" (XXXV, 506). Once more attentive to the consequences for human beings, Marx ends this great chapter in noting that, like the mechanization of industry, that of agriculture is inimical to individual workers:

In agriculture as in manufacture, the transformation of production under the sway of capital means, at the same time, the martyrdom of the producer; the instrument of labor becomes the means of enslaving, exploiting, and impoverishing the laborer; the social combination and organization of labor processes is turned into an organized mode of crushing out the workman's individual vitality, freedom, and independence. (XXXV, 507)

Part five, which is very short, is divided into three tiny chapters concerning "Absolute and relative surplus value" (chapter 16), "Changes of magnitude in the price of labor power and surplus value" (chapter 17), and "Various formulae for the rate of surplus value" (chapter 18). The discussion here, which is both technical and repetitive of earlier discussion, can be summarized very briefly. As Marx repeatedly stresses, capitalism is centered, not on the production of commodities, but rather on the production of surplus value. The relation of the owner of the means of production to the worker is to a person whose labor power creates surplus value. The distinction between relative surplus value and absolute surplus value, drawn earlier, merely picks out different ways to produce surplus value. Marx has earlier addressed the evolution of society which is presupposed by industrial production leading to surplus value. He now complains that surplus value is merely presupposed as natural by such political economists as Ricardo and J. S. Mill.

This polemic continues in the two subsequent chapters. In remarks on the price of labor power and surplus value, Marx relies on Ricardo to show that surplus value and the value of labor power vary inversely. He criticizes Ricardo for overlooking changes in the length of the working day intended to increase absolute surplus value and in the intensity of work intended to increase relative surplus value. In comments on the rate of surplus value, Marx maintains it has been falsely calculated by classical political economists. He ends with a splendid passage, which summarizes the difference

between his basic insight that modern industrial society centers on the control of unpaid labor and political economy:

Capital, therefore, is not only, as Adam Smith says, the command over labor. It is essentially the command over unpaid labor. All surplus labor, whatever particular form (profit, interest, or rent) it may subsequently crystallize into, is in substance the materialization of unpaid labor. The secret of the self-expansion of capital resolves itself into having the disposal of a definite quantity of other people's unpaid labor. (XXXV, 534)

The very short part five, less than thirty pages, shorter than many of the individual chapters in this book, considers the general theme of "Wages" in four even shorter chapters, beginning with "The transformation of the value (and respectively the price) of labor power into wages." In considering "The transformation of the value (and respectively the price) of labor power into wages" (chapter 19) Marx states his controversial version of the labor theory of value as a function of the work required to produce a given commodity: "But what is the value of a commodity? The objective form of the social labor expended in its production" (XXXV, 535). Labor, which is the source of value, has no value in itself. Its price is determined by the law of supply and demand. But the expression "price of labor" should be taken as "the price of labor power," which is calculated in the form of wages. In Marx's opinion, the fact that the value of labor is always less than the value it produces is concealed in the concept of wages in which the unpaid labor is hidden. "This phenomenal form, which makes the actual relation invisible, and, indeed, shows the direct opposite of that relation, forms the basis of all juridical notions of both laborer and capitalist, of all the mystifications of the capitalist mode of production, of all its illusions as to liberty, of all the apologetic shifts of the vulgar economists" (XXXV, 540).

Marx now considers in rapid succession "Time wages," "Piece wages," and "National differences of wages." As concerns the former, he maintains that economic discussions usually neglect differences such as that between calculating wages in terms of time worked or the number of articles produced. In passing he adds, now completing the argument in the previous chapter, that in general capitalists are unaware that the price of labor includes unpaid labor or that profit depends on it. In the discussion of piece-wages, he notes that an approach to wages as a function of piece-work increases the intensity of the labor. In the account of national differences of wages, he points out, which seems obvious enough, that different conditions prevail in different countries.

The accumulation of capital is central to capitalism. Marx addresses accu-

mulation in two phases: part seven, on "The accumulation of capital," studies how this occurs in modern industrial society in some detail. Part eight, which ends the volume, studies "The so-called primitive accumulation" leading up to modern capitalism. In the former, Marx elaborates a general theory of capital accumulation as the result of the three-fold process through which (1) capital in the form of money is transformed into the means of production, such as tools and factories, and labor power; (2) commodities are produced whose value is greater than their costs of production, since surplus value is generated in the form of unpaid labor; and (3) the commodities are sold to realize surplus value in order to transform it into capital. He studies the accumulation of capital in modern industrial society in three chapters: "Simple reproduction" (chapter 23), "Conversion of surplus value into capital" (chapter 24), and "The general law of capitalist accumulation" (chapter 25).

The discussion of simple reproduction is based on the insight that production is in fact a process of reproduction. In the process of producing new products in order to supply wages to the worker and profit to the owner of the means of production, production ultimately reproduces itself. Simple reproduction occurs when the revenue produced in this way serves only to furnish money used by the owner of the means of production for his own consumption. The worker, on the contrary, merely receives a portion of what he himself produces, since "it is the laborer's own labor, realized in a product, which is advanced to him by the capitalist" (XXXV, 568).

Capital is composed of variable capital and constant capital, invested in buildings, machinery, and so on. Since the latter is consumed in the process of production, all capital eventually becomes accumulated capital, or the accumulation of surplus value. It follows that the starting point of capitalist production, which lies in the separation between labor and its product, or labor power from its objective conditions, is constantly reproduced through simple reproduction within the process of production. More precisely, the result of the normal functioning of the productive process is to increase capital for the capitalist. Yet the worker, who creates that wealth, but sells his labor power to do so, has no means of acquiring it. Now accumulation of capital not only needs capitalists to supply the objective conditions of production; it also requires workers to produce commodities. A further result is that the process in effect produces the worker as a worker. In a summary passage, Marx writes:

The laborer therefore constantly produces material, objective wealth, but in the form of capital, of an alien power that dominates and exploits him; and the capitalist as constantly produces labor power, but in the

form of a subjective source of wealth, separated from the objects in and by which it can alone be realized; in short he produces the laborer, but as a wage laborer. This incessant reproduction, this perpetuation of the laborer, is the *sine qua non* of capitalist production. (XXXV, 570–1)

The more general point is that in its normal functioning capitalist production reproduces the separation between labor power and the means of labor, between what the worker provides and what the owner of the means of production provides, between the subjective and the objective conditions of production. Hence not in abnormal but rather in normal times it produces and reproduces the conditions for exploiting the worker. It follows that the process of production produces commodities, profit, and the structure of capitalism itself. "Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage laborer" (XXXV, 577).

In the account of simple reproduction, Marx argues that in the course of production capital is turned into accumulated capital. He studies this theme in more detail under the heading of the conversion of surplus value into capital. Surplus value, which is contained in the product, becomes capital when it is transformed into money. Now only what belongs to the process of production can be converted into capital. Surplus value can be converted into capital because it furnishes the conditions for continuing the process of production in the form of new capital. In this way, capital constantly creates new capital. It has repeatedly been noted that the creation of new capital depends on two conditions: the appropriation without payment of surplus value which is "concretized" or "materialized" in the form of a product, and the exchange of that product for money. This result follows naturally and seamlessly as soon as the worker is forced, in order to meet his needs, to work for a living. On the basis of his conception of surplus value as belonging to the owner of the means of production, Marx rejects Smith's idea that the part of surplus value which is converted into capital goes to the workers. Marx points out that surplus value is, rather, partly consumed by the capitalist as revenue and partly reinvested in the form of capital. He suggests more generally that classical political economy never grasped reproduction, since it failed to comprehend the way value is created.

The chapter on the general law of capitalist accumulation, which closes this part, is both longer – about a hundred pages – and more detailed than the preceding chapters. Marx is here concerned with two themes discussed

as early as the *Paris Manuscripts*: the way in which capitalism literally produces its own supply of workers, and the effect of the accumulation of capital on individual workers. In order for capital to grow, that part invested in variable capital, or labor power, must increase. It follows, as classical economy already knew, that increase in profit depends on an increase in workers. "Accumulation of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat" (XXXV, 609). This conclusion is justified by the correlation between the accumulation of capital and the rate of pay; that is, the correlation between unpaid labor which is transformed into capital and paid labor which keeps the process going. If more labor is necessary, then wages rise, and conversely. Hence, the law of supply and demand also applies to workers, who, like the commodities they produce, depend on modern industrial society. In a late example of his Feuerbachian approach, Marx writes: "As, in religion, man is governed by the products of his own brain, so in capitalistic production, he is governed by the products of his own hand" (XXXV, 616).

The accumulation of capital is due to various factors, such as the increase in the number of workers, or increased productivity. In the latter connection, Marx studies such mechanisms as the increasing concentration of capital in the hands of a few people (today we might talk of limiting competition), the increase of competition among different producers, say, by a price war, for instance by lowering the price of gasoline at the pump, the development of different forms of credit, and so on.

Naturally, the accumulation of capital brought about by workers impacts on the working population. An increase in productivity, for instance, turns workers into surplus workers, who soon join the ranks of the unemployed. Conversely, modern industrial society depends on the availability of a pool of workers which "forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost" (XXXV, 626). For if there were not enough workers, wages and salaries would rise, hence undercutting the development of capital. At all times, there must be enough workers, including a certain amount of workers unemployed or partially employed, to maximize the expansion of capital.

In general the more capital increases the more workers make up the industrial reserve army waiting to find jobs. Now echoing his early discussion of alienation in the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx argues that the various mechanisms which increase productivity tend to dehumanize workers:

Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productivity of labor are brought about at the cost of the individual laborer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into

means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the laborer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into hated toil. (XXXV, 639)

The wider point, which has been made many times before, is that workers impoverish themselves as a direct result of bringing about an increase in wealth: "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital" (XXXV, 640). In the more than fifty remaining pages in this chapter, Marx abundantly illustrates this claim through a long series of concrete examples vividly depicting the harrowing conditions of the working class in the England of his time.

The eighth and last part of the book treats "The so-called primitive accumulation" in a series of eight very short chapters, together comprising some sixty pages. Primitive accumulation precedes and makes possible capital accumulation. Money and commodities, which are distinct from capital, can only become capital on the double condition that the owners of the means of production are willing to employ workers, and workers are willing to sell their labor power. A worker, who possesses his own means of production, for instance a self-employed farmer, is only willing to work for someone else if he loses these means, in this case the farm. Primitive accumulation refers to the way that individuals are deprived of the means of production in order to create the necessary condition of modern industrial society. "The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production" (XXXV, 705–6).

Observing that this process is different in different lands, Marx studies it in England where it assumed a classic form. The disappearance of serfdom by the end of the fourteenth century led to a situation in which a majority of the population consisted of free peasant proprietors. This situation was altered in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries as the peasants were driven from the land. The wholesale usurpation of the common lands was the direct result of the rise of Flemish wool manufacturers, in turn leading to the transformation of farm land into pasture which was then enclosed starting in the late fifteenth century. The dispossession of the peasants, which was later continued in different ways, such as the spoliation of Church property at the time of the Reformation, transformed them over time into a proletarian work force later able to supply labor as industry developed in urban areas. This series of expropriations of the peasants "conquered the field for

capitalist agriculture, made the soil part and parcel of capital, and created for the town industries the necessary supply of a 'free' and outlawed proletariat" (XXXV, 723).

The ongoing expropriation of the peasants created a work force which could not be absorbed by the nascent manufactures, transforming most of these men into "beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances" (XXXV, 723). Marx provides detailed accounts of the atrocious living conditions of this "free" proletariat. In 1530, during the time of Henry VIII, those who refused to work were whipped on the first offense, mutilated on the second, and executed on the third as enemies of the state. Primitive accumulation, the same process which dispossessed the English peasants, created the capitalist farmer, the home market for industrial capital, and finally the industrial capitalist. Expropriation of the peasants created the great landed proprietor, whose capital increased in value as the prices of agricultural produce (e.g., corn, wool, meat) rose. By the same token, the destruction of rural domestic industry created a market for industrial products which were bought by peasants who, through expropriation, were transformed into workers. The rise of the industrial capitalist followed a somewhat different route. Since the middle ages, capital had existed as usurer's capital and merchant capital. It did not become industrial capital until the end of feudalism dissolved the guild system. This was further aided by such events as the discovery of gold and silver in America, the colonization of the East Indies, and the beginning of the slave trade with Africa. It was especially aided by the rise of a system of public credit which in time led to a banking system able to lend money, to a system of taxation, commercial wars, and so on.

The final two chapters, on "The modern theory of colonization" (chapter 33) and the "Historical tendency of capitalist accumulation" (chapter 32) appear to be out of their natural order in respect to the argument in the book. The former treats colonization, a theme which belongs to the different forms of primitive accumulation, whereas the latter brings the discussion of this part and of the volume to a close in a brief comment on the prospects of modern industrial society. Marx's interest in colonies is explained by their role in primitive accumulation, especially in England. It is evident that capitalism cannot flourish in the colonies any more than in England while each settler can turn land, which is public property, into private property. Once again, the reason is that capitalism demands as its precondition a separation between the means of production and the worker. Although the mother country continues to invest, there is not enough labor since there are not enough laborers. Fortunately for capitalism, the American Civil War increased

national debt, raised taxes, and squandered public lands to the extent that it greatly encouraged industrial production. Marx's point is again that in the new world, as in the old, the "production and accumulation, and therefore capitalist private property, have for their fundamental condition the annihilation of self-earned private property; in other words, the expropriation of the laborer" (XXXV, 761).

In the penultimate chapter, conceptually the final piece of the argument, Marx ends his great book with a rapid remark, taking up a theme already discussed in the *Paris Manuscripts*, on the weak long-term prospects for modern industrial society in virtue of the tendency of capital to accumulate. Since his earliest writings, he has consistently presupposed a distinction between private property, or private ownership of the means of production, and social or collective property, which belongs not to individual capitalists, but to everyone. Historically, the process of development passes from the stage in which individuals exploit their private property to a further stage in which capitalists exploit the work of others. In the normal course of events, small capital is transformed into bigger and bigger capital through a process of centralization in which "One capitalist always kills many" (XXXV, 750). Marx contends that in following its own tendency to increase, capital multiplies but finally only destroys private property. "Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. Thus integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated" (XXXV, 750).

Marx now restates this dialectical claim, which is based on the application of the Hegelian idea of contradiction, or the negation of the negation. He contends that the overthrow of capitalism, based on private property, will inevitably destroy private property by rendering it public property, or more precisely individual property resulting from the gains of capitalism. "The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labor of the proprietor. But capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation" (XXXV, 751). We recall that, for Marx, Feuerbach was finally, despite his intentions, a Hegelian. Marx ends the volume with a Feuerbachian reversal in suggesting that the coming transformation of capitalism into socialism through the change in private property, in itself an expropriation of the expropriators, will be infinitely less difficult than the establishment of capitalism.

The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labor, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, violent, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialized production, into socialized property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people. (XXXV, 764)

Notes

- 1 See Marx's letter to Lassalle, January 30, 1860, in MEW vol. 30, p. 439; CW vol. 41, p. 12.
- 2 Marx's letter to Engels, February 3, 1860, in MEW vol. 30, p. 23; CW vol. 41, p. 23.
- 3 See letter to J. Bloch of September 21, 1890, in MEW vol. 37, p. 465.
- 4 See letter of March 18, 1860, in MEW vol. 14, p. 679; CW vol. 31, pp. 518–19.
- 5 See Marx's letter to Engels, January 29, 1861, in MEW vol. 30, p. 10; CW vol. 41, p. 252.
- 6 See Marx's letter to Kugelmann, December 28, 1862, in MEW vol. 30, p. 639; CW vol. 42, p. 435.
- 7 See Marx's letter to Engels, July 31, 1865, in MEW vol. 31, p. 132; CW vol. 42, p. 173.
- 8 See Marx's letter to Kugelmann, January 15, 1866, in MEW vol. 31, p. 496; CW vol. 42, p. 221.
- 9 See Marx's letter to Engels, August 13, 1866, in MEW vol. 31, p. 252.
- 10 See Marx's letter to Engels, November 10, 1866, in MEW vol. 31, p. 263; CW vol. 32, p. 332.
- 11 See Marx's letter to Engels, December 8, 1866, in MEW vol. 31, p. 266; CW vol. 42, p. 336.
- 12 See Marx's letter to Engels, April 2, 1867, in MEW vol. 31, p. 281; CW vol. 42, p. 350.
- 13 Marx's letter to Engels, June 22, 1867, in MEW vol. 31, p. 305; CW vol. 42, p. 383.
- 14 For criticism of Kautsky's edition from an orthodox Marxist standpoint, which supposedly made a new edition necessary, see MEW, vol. 26, pp. xiv–xvii. This new German edition is also based on the Russian edition published by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For a description, see MEW vol. 26, pp. xvii–xxiv.
- 15 For discussion of Engels's controversial editing practices concerning *Capital*, see George L. Kline, "The Myth of Marx's Materialism," Appendix 1, in *Philosophical Sovietology: The Pursuit of a Science*, ed. Helmut Dahm, Tho-

- mas J. Blakeley, and George L. Kline, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1988, pp. 183–97.
- 16 Fowkes, in the more recent translation, reproduces this sentence without indicating or apparently even being aware that it was added by Engels. See Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes, New York: Vintage, 1976, p. 635.
 - 17 For this passage, see Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. Frederick Engels, New York: International Publishers, 1975, pp. 584–7. This passage is silently omitted in the version of *Capital* vol. 1, based on the same translation, which appears in the *Collected Works*, vol. 25.
 - 18 There are only seven parts in the German original. Part eight in the translation, which has been quarried without comment from part seven in the original first volume, contains a long chapter 24 with seven subsections which, in translation, each become separate chapters alongside the original chapter 25. Is it unclear how to justify this change in Marx's text and none is given.
 - 19 See MEW vol. 23, p. 843, n. 1.
 - 20 In a recent book, Pitt, who specializes in technology, makes no references at all to Marx. See Joseph C. Pitt, *Thinking About Technology: Foundations of the Philosophy of Technology*, New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2000.
 - 21 See Aristotle, *Politics*, I, 9, 1257a.
 - 22 See *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, §67.
 - 23 Nassau W. Senior, *Letters on the Factory Act*, as it affects the cotton manufacture, cited in Marx, *Capital* vol. 1, *Collected Works* vol. 25, p. 233. Marx was so impressed by this idea that he repeats it again later in the volume. See CW vol. 35, p. 592.
 - 24 See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan, intro. Max Lerner, New York: Modern Library, 1937, p. 79.

5

Marx and Hegel Revisited

I have now come to the end of my selective exposition of some main texts in Marx's corpus, chosen with an eye to their philosophical significance. Since Marx was a prolific writer, many other texts could have been discussed, such as volumes two and three of *Capital*, or volume four of *Capital* which contains the three books of the *Theories of Surplus Value*, or above all his very numerous political writings. Although there are these other candidates for inclusion, I believe that most of Marx's philosophically interesting texts have already been touched on. I further believe that enough texts have been discussed in enough detail to reveal a continuously developing position, with no obvious breaks or discontinuities. The discussion has tracked the development of Marx's theories from his earliest writings, in his critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, then through the increasingly detailed critique of political economy and in the emergence and elaboration of Marx's distinctive theory of modern industrial society, ending with the first volume of *Capital*.

Before expounding Marx's position, I described an unorthodox approach to his relation to Marxism and to Hegel. Marxist orthodoxy from Engels to Althusser generally regards Marx and Marxism as indistinguishably similar and Marx and Hegel as sharply opposed. I issued a promissory note in claiming that to consider Marx and Marxism as one continuous position, world view, or set of theories, which may be legitimate for political reasons, obscures his relation to Hegel and, as a consequence, his philosophical position. It remains now to redeem that promissory note through a more detailed, but still introductory, look at Marx's relation to Hegel in this chapter, before taking a final look at Marx's overall philosophical position in the next chapter.

Marx's explicit attention to philosophy and to political economy occurs at different times in his corpus. In his very first writings on Hegel, Marx is already concerned with political economy in very spare, but effective fashion,

crucial for the later development and subsequent evolution of his position. In his "Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'," he begins to criticize Hegel on the basis of his own rival idea that property, which Hegel mainly considers from a legal point of view, should be understood primarily in economic terms. This simple but crucial change in the proper attitude toward property helps us to understand the origin of Marx's later view of modern industrial society as based on the economic institution of private property.¹ As early as the companion essay "Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction," Marx adopts the Hegelian idea that the social context changes under the pressure of internal contradictions which work themselves out in the historical process. Hence, even before he began to formulate a view of modern industrial society, he was already working with the crucial Hegelian insight, crucial as well to the formulation of Marx's position, that the modern industrialized world is basically unstable, fated in virtue of its internal contradictions to change into a different kind of society.

In his very early writings, say through the *Paris Manuscripts*, when he was most directly concerned with philosophy, he does not yet have more than a minimal grasp of political economy. Beginning with the *Paris Manuscripts* he has already begun to study the topic in detail. At this time he undertakes to criticize contemporary political economy with a vengeance, while also beginning to formulate the outlines of his position, which he later develops and deepens but never basically altered. In writings up to the *Poverty of Philosophy* he directly criticizes Hegel, his young Hegelian colleagues, and philosophy. In the *Paris Manuscripts*, and again after the *Poverty of Philosophy*, three important changes occur in Marx's writings. First, he continues to rely on his original philosophical insights while forging others. Second, he increasingly turns away from direct analysis of philosophy and toward critique of political economy. Third, he increasingly puts forward his own alternative theory.

Does he turn away from philosophy? If the question means does he stop discussing philosophy as the central topic, then the answer must be yes. If the question means does he make use of his philosophical ideas in other domains, such as political economy, the answer must be no. It would be a decisive mistake to distinguish sharply (with a view to isolating) Marx's direct concern with philosophical issues in his earliest writings from his increasing interest, on the basis of his earlier texts, in the critique of political economy and formulation of an alternative theory of modern industrial society in later writings. Since the three themes (philosophy, political economy, and modern industrial society) are interrelated throughout Marx's writings from beginning to end, philosophy and economics can simply never be separated at

any point in Marx's thought. After he completed the dissertation and began to write, there is no moment at which one can say he has left philosophy behind and just as surprisingly, since his formal study of economics only begins about the time of his initial critique of Hegel, there is also none in which he has not yet begun to consider economic factors. In a word, just as soon as he begins to write, philosophy and political economy are always intertwined in Marx's texts.

There is a reciprocal relationship between his interests in philosophy and political economy. His criticism of Hegel, even in his early writings, is finally economic in character, more precisely shaped by an economic rather than a legal conception of property; but his critique of political economy is Hegelian, based on a view of history, which he incorporates into his own theory of modern industrial society from a historical point of view. Accordingly, this chapter falls into three main parts. In the first part, I will (once again) argue that Marx's critique of Hegel follows from and builds on his earliest insights into political economy. In the second part, I will maintain that Marx's critique of political economy is based from beginning to end on a generally Hegelian approach. In the third part, I will contend that Marx's rival theory of modern industrial society further develops his Hegelian perspective.

As in the exposition of Marx's writings, this part of the discussion will presuppose a distinction in kind between Marx and Marxism. One result will be to show that Marx's critique (and philosophical appropriation) of Hegel, his critique of political economy, and his own rival theories of political economy and modern industrial society all derive from a single unitary conceptual vision. Another is to show that if the aim is to understand Marx, then it is crucial to go beyond politically motivated Marxist claims for distinctions in kind between Marx and Hegel, or again between Marx and philosophy, or even between philosophy and science; for it is only in this way that one can see that in the final analysis Marx is not only a philosopher, or a German philosopher, but a German Hegelian, hence a German idealist philosopher.

Prior Discussion of Marx's Relation to Hegel

It is not possible to construct an exhaustive list of the views of this relation, mentioned by nearly everyone who writes on Marx. In his compendious study of Marxism, Kolakowski devotes space to Hegel in a general discussion of the origins of dialectic, but gives no more than cursory attention to the Hegel–Marx relation.² Henry is not very familiar with Hegel, nor very interested in the Hegel–Marx relation.³ Löwith sees the need to understand Marx against

the Hegelian background, but simply does not go far enough in his treatment of the topic.⁴ Hook, who accords considerable space to aspects of Marx's relation to Hegelianism, is more familiar with the young Hegelians than with Hegel.⁵ Hartmann, who knows both Marx and Hegel very well, provides very useful discussion of their relation in some detail.⁶ Hyppolite's insightful series of essays on this theme does not form a connected account. Wood provides a sophisticated analysis of Marx with several chapters on the relation to Hegel.⁷ Books by Wolf and by Cöster are among the most detailed accounts of which I am aware.⁸

These writers are exceptions. Most study of this theme is conducted by partisans of either Hegel or Marx, who tend not to know much, not nearly enough, about the other. The relative ignorance of Hegelians, who are insufficiently informed about Marx, is fully matched by those interested in Marx, who do not often have a good, or even an adequate grasp of Hegel. Hegel scholars, convinced that Marx's critique strikes at most a glancing blow, rarely verify that conviction. Marx is one of Hegel's most significant critics, but non-Marxist Hegel scholars tend simply to ignore his criticism.⁹ In their refusal to contemplate the post-Hegelian development of philosophy, they unwittingly provide versions of the young Hegelian claim that philosophy worthy of the name comes to a peak and an end in Hegel.

Marxists often mention Hegel, but their treatment of him is rarely adequate.¹⁰ They consistently point out that in his writings Marx leaves (mere) academic philosophy behind in favor of solidly linking theory with human practice. Almost without exception they concentrate on refuting rather than on understanding Hegel or on appropriating Hegelian insights. From this angle of vision, Hegel's importance for Marx is wholly or at least mainly negative, as something the latter rejects. The idea that earlier writers are only or mainly significant in leading up to a particular figure is a familiar philosophical conceit. Just as Hegel is reputed to consider earlier writers as mere stages leading up to his own position, Marxists, to the best of my knowledge without exception – how could it be otherwise? – consider Hegel as merely leading up to Marx.

Engels knew neither philosophy nor Hegel well. Since Engels, few Marxists, including Lenin,¹¹ have been well versed in Hegel. Even such important exceptions in the Marxist camp as Lukács, Korsch, and Kojève, who know Hegel well, typically regard him in the final analysis as no more than a stepping stone to Marx. Marxist denigration of Hegel retarded awareness of his significance for Marx's position, hence a comprehension of Marx's own contribution, over many years. The breakthrough to Hegelian Marxism by Lukács and Korsch only occurred in 1923, at a time when institutionalized

Marxism, hence a Marxist interpretation of the relation of Marx to Hegel, was already well established. Lukács, who was deeply knowledgeable about Hegel, made important contributions to Hegel studies in a long series of works. In a sense, most of his philosophical and even his literary corpus centers on the relation of Marx to Hegel. Yet once he became a Marxist his strong politically orthodox tendencies constantly led him to treat Hegelian idealism as finally a bourgeois phantasy.¹² Korsch was simply not sufficiently aware of Hegel to consider the relation in any detail.¹³ Kojève, who knew Hegel's *Phenomenology* very well, elaborated a fascinating but tendentious reading of it, anachronistically "filtered" through Marx and Heidegger. In his reading, Hegel's great book is centered around the famous, hugely important master-slave discussion, which is not central to Hegel, nor even central to the *Phenomenology*.¹⁴ Vranicki, who provides the most detailed Marxist study of Marxism, has no direct discussion of Hegel.¹⁵

Much has been done, but we apparently still lack an adequate account of the relation of Marx to Hegel, which studies the different views of it as well as the primary texts in the detail they require. This relation is central to an understanding of Marx's position for two main reasons. On the one hand, the fact that Marx's theories arose in a philosophical period dominated by Hegel suggests there is simply no reasonable alternative to understanding the genesis of Marx's position against the wider Hegelian background, including Hegel and the young Hegelians, particularly Feuerbach. On the other, if Marx is best understood not in opposition to but rather within Hegelianism, then a revised view of Marx will help us to understand what his (philosophical) position still has to offer us. In building on the prior exposition of Marx in order to reread his relation to Hegel, this chapter will open the way to evaluation of Marx's philosophical significance.

Hegel in Marx's Writings

Heidegger talks of the need to dialogue with a great thinker on the latter's level. This type of dialogue is arguably present in Marx's continual interrogation of Hegel throughout his writings. Marx's attitude toward Hegel, which develops in a complex interaction between two thinkers, takes a decisive direction as soon as it begins. Thinkers of genius depart from their predecessors in changing the terms of the debate. The main outlines of Hegel's later position is already present, at least implicitly, in his first philosophical publication, which ostensibly merely concerns the difference between the views of Fichte and Schelling.¹⁶ His later writings elaborate, deepen, broaden,

develop, and work out, but do not change this initial statement of his position, which forms the basis of all his later writings. In much the same way, Marx's later position follows seamlessly, or almost seamlessly, from his initial critique of Hegel. In retrospect we already see there much of what he accepts, much of what he rejects in Hegel, the shape of his understanding of the latter's position, the types of objections he will later raise against orthodox political economy, and the outlines of his own position, including what later becomes his own theory of modern industrial society.

Marx consistently criticizes Hegel from an economic perspective even when, early on, his own background in economics is still very imperfect. In his initial discussion of the *Philosophy of Right* Marx's main complaints center around Hegel's supposedly insufficient awareness of the role of political economy in modern industrial society. His objection that Hegel does not accord sufficient weight to economic factors amounts to the claim that anything less than an economy-centered model of modern society fails to comprehend its basic nature.

Marx begins with detailed consideration of §261 of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, which occurs early in Hegel's treatment of the state. In rapid succession, Hegel maintains that the state is the actuality of the ethical idea (§257), absolutely rational (§258), and, concerning (constitutional) law, the actuality of freedom (§260). Continuing his account of (constitutional) law, in §261 Hegel maintains that private right and welfare are dependent on the authority of the state which is also their immanent aim, since particular interests are realized in the state in general form.

Marx's critique is based on a close examination of the nine lines of §261 and Hegel's appended remark to it (*Bemerkung*) – about a page and a half – to which he devotes almost five single-spaced pages. According to Marx, Hegel's concern with civil law, as distinguished from the (empirical) collision between competing interests, creates an illusory identity between alienated elements, which masks an unresolved antinomy. In Hegel's supposedly mystical account, the family and civil society emerge from the state, and not conversely, since the idea is turned into the real subject and the real relations of the family and civil society are demoted to merely imaginary ideas. In Marx's opinion, Hegel substitutes a concern with logic for study of empirical reality in inverting the relation of the family and civil society to the state. Examples include a failure to grasp the specificity of what occurs, a turn away from real human subjects, an insensitivity to the difference in the interests of particular individuals and the state, a failure to see that private property determines the state and not conversely, and a related failure to see that political representation merely represents private property.

It is not difficult to glimpse the main lines of Marx's future theories in his initial critique of Hegel. Marx objects to a supposedly logical view inadequate to grasp social reality on the basis of his own nascent rival view. The main objection turns on views of civil society and property. In Marx's opinion, Hegel's logical analysis overlooks the central empirical point: the state and everything else is finally determined by civil society whose central force is (private) property. In other words, through property civil society determines the state and not conversely. It follows that a theory which really grasps modern society must be a basically economic theory, based on the economic role of (private) property. Despite his grasp of economics, Hegel fails to comprehend its centrality in the modern world, as illustrated by his incorrect approach to property.

Hegel and Marx on Private Property

A disagreement about (private) property is central to Marx's objection to Hegel. Hegel sees the defense of private property as essential to a free life in modern society; but Marx sees property as essential to developing freedom in a future society whose real possibility depends on later abolishing private property.

Marx's critique of Hegel for underestimating the centrality of civil society and his legal approach to property are clearly related. If private property is the pivot of modern industrial society, then everything else, for instance a legal approach to property in general, is secondary to it. It is because he fails to grasp the more basic economic role of property that in Marx's opinion Hegel also goes astray in his understanding of the relation of society to human freedom.

Hegel's interest in property begins early in his career. In his earliest writings from the 1790s, he is already concerned with the relation between property and law, which he develops in later writings.¹⁷ In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel is more interested in property (*Eigentum*, from *eigen*, meaning "own" or "peculiar," or *Eigen*, meaning "possession," literally as a possession, or *Besitz*) which can be legally defended if necessary as a motivating factor in social development. In his book, Hegel studies the mediation of needs and individual satisfactions through work, then the way that the fact that an individual is mainly concerned with himself (the view which is usually imputed to Adam Smith) impacts on the satisfaction of the needs of others within the framework of civil society. He further studies the actuality of freedom through the protection of property in the administration of justice.¹⁸ In

Hegel's opinion real freedom is only reached when one's property is legally protected through a system of justice.¹⁹ He endorses the promulgation of laws as binding within civil society. They are useful in defending property through legally valid contracts,²⁰ which can be enforced.²¹

Unlike Hegel, who is concerned with the legal defense of property, Marx is primarily concerned with property as capital, including possession of the means of production which, with the separation between capital and labor, is one of the two necessary conditions for the production of commodities leading to the accumulation of capital. Marx never defends either the general institution of property or even private property in the specifically economic sense as essential to realize freedom for society as a whole in the short run. In the short run, private property at best secures the interests of a few property owners while increasing the economic differences between them and everyone else. But in the long run private property supposedly produces the concrete economic conditions which will one day enable human beings to regain human control of the economic sector of society. From the *Paris Manuscripts* to *Capital*, Marx consistently maintains that the benefits of property for society as a whole will be felt through economic development which one day will enable all individuals to escape from the domination of economic imperatives in every sector of their lives.

The German Ideology contends that such fields as law and philosophy function as ideological defense mechanisms of modern industrial society. In the famous introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx introduces an explicit distinction between superstructure and base implicitly presupposed earlier. He maintains that in modern society everything else is subordinated to the primacy of political economy, which itself rests on the institution of private property. As early as the *Paris Manuscripts*, and in a series of later texts, he increasingly elaborates a vision of modern capitalism based on private property. Capitalism requires private property since without it capitalism does not exist.

It is interesting, in view of the frequent claim that his later position breaks with his earlier writings, that the early writings already contain in outline key features of the position described in *Capital*. These include Marx's later understanding of the relation of private property to capital and of the tendency of the real contradictions of modern capitalism to transform it into another, post-capitalist society. The *German Ideology* studies the genesis of modern industrial society in a series of stages centering on the forms of property from ancient agricultural society to the nineteenth century. In the *Poverty of Philosophy* Marx outlines a theory of value which becomes the basis of the labor theory of value worked out in much greater detail in

the *Grundrisse*, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, and finally in *Capital*.

Hegel and Marx on History and Freedom

Marx's critique of Hegel's treatment of property is deep and important. His critique of Hegel's view of history is more complex and finally less convincing, in part because it is based on a generally Feuerbachian approach.

With few exceptions, philosophy was late in acknowledging the importance of history. This only occurred after the eruption of one of the great series of historical events of modern times, the French Revolution. The Platonic view of knowledge, according to which what we know is beyond time and place, in time but not of time, now and forever, influenced the Greek view of history. It is then no accident that the Greeks wrote history, but did not see any philosophical importance in it. Aristotle famously suggests that poetry, which deals with universals, with what a certain type of person will say or do, is philosophically more important than history, whose statements are singulars, such as what Alcibiades did or had done to him.²²

Kant, the last great pre-revolutionary philosopher, was interested in history but did not consider philosophy as a historical discipline or knowledge as historical. This transition abruptly begins in Kant's student, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the self-proclaimed orthodox Kantian as well as the first great post-revolutionary philosopher, and in Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). In *Outlines of the Philosophy of History of Man* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784–91) Herder argues that the historian needs to consider different societies as presenting different models. He can be taken as suggesting that all human achievements, including claims to know, should be seen as relative to the society in which they originate.²³ Under the influence of the French Revolution, which he publicly defended against his colleagues, Fichte became one of the first philosophers, certainly one of the first modern philosophers, above all the first German idealist, to regard philosophy as intrinsically historical. As a Kantian, his effort to realize Kant's view of the primacy of practice led him, unlike Kant, to understand the subject of knowledge as finite human beings situated in a changing historical context. This general idea is greatly extended in Hegel, one of the most historical of all philosophers. Humboldt contributed to comparative linguistics through the idea that the inner form of languages (*innere Sprachform*), as distinguished from mere grammatical form, carries with it a deep subjective view of the world.

Hegel's complex philosophy is historical in at least four distinct ways. First, he is interested in history, or the philosophy of history. Like Kant and Fichte before him, Hegel holds that history can be understood if and only if it is inherently rational.²⁴ Like Fichte, he was deeply interested in the French Revolution, which he regarded as a turning point in modern history.²⁵ Second, he was concerned with the history of philosophy, which he can be said to invent. Although we know more about individual figures than was known in his day, it is doubtful that we know more about the history of philosophy. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*²⁶ Hegel brought consideration of the philosophical past to a height it has only rarely if ever again attained and certainly never later surpassed. It is a truism that all later histories of philosophy build on Hegel's. Third, he focused attention on a view of philosophy as historical. Kant's view of philosophy as unhistorical, but systematic, still remains the main philosophical conception at present. Most philosophers believe there is little reason to consider earlier ideas, or to have more than a passing acquaintance with prior philosophical theories. Like Newton, who accurately claimed to build on the shoulders of giants, Hegel claims to take up in his own theory all that is of value in the preceding discussion. He presents a basically historical view of philosophy in which a distinction in kind cannot be drawn between prior views and his own. Earlier theories occupy specific places within the wider discussion which encompasses them all, including his own. Fourth, there is the idea of knowledge itself as historical. From Plato to Kant, and beyond, the epistemological debate consists in a series of efforts to show that and how we can know the real, or mind-independent reality, as it is and not only as it appears at a given time and place. This effort peaks in Kant's attempt to discern the ahistorical conditions of knowledge through an analysis of pure reason. In criticizing Kant's view of pure reason, Hegel formulates a theory of spirit, roughly "impure" reason, which is not independent of, but rather dependent on, its time and place.

Hegel's view of history underlies his idea of the historical realization of freedom through the evolution of society. This view is shared by Marx. Like Hegel, he is not satisfied with prior philosophical ideas of freedom, such as the idea of moral freedom which Kant invokes as the condition of morality (i.e., the choice of the right course of action for the right reasons), or even with the abstract principles embodied in the "Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man" ("La Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen," 1789), which emerged from the French Revolution. Further, like Hegel, he regards human freedom as only realized in a social context. Again like Hegel, he recognizes that an understanding of meaningful human freedom requires a theory of modern industrial society as it existed after the industrial revolu-

tion. Finally, like Hegel, Marx does not regard freedom as a given, as always already there in any real sense, but rather as a historical product of the evolution of society.

Hegel's view of the realization of freedom in a historical context draws on many sources, particularly Rousseau. Hegel's famous analysis of the relation between master and slave in the *Phenomenology* echoes Rousseau's celebrated observation in *The Social Contract* that man is born free but everywhere he is in chains.²⁷ As Rousseau brings out, modern society enmeshes individuals in a web of social relations (what Max Weber later called an iron cage),²⁸ which effectively prevents them from developing their individual capacities.

Hegel's brilliant depiction of the master–slave relation has been enormously influential on many intellectual figures including Marx, the French philosophers Kojève and Emmanuel Levinas (1906–96), the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901–81), and many others. This relation can be understood in religious and non-religious terms. As a religious metaphor, concerning the relation of the finite individual to the infinite God, Hegel anticipates the characteristic Feuerbachian view that religion is a human projection.²⁹ In non-religious terms, it is often taken as a metaphor for the relation of capitalists and workers in modern industrial society. This analysis obviously prefigures Marx's view of capitalism as a struggle between two classes divided by their relation to the means of production. Kojève, who was deeply impressed by Hegel's analysis, based his famous reading of the *Phenomenology* on it. In a relation of fundamental inequality, neither master nor slave is free in a meaningful sense, that is autonomous, since each depends on the other. Within the master–slave relation, freedom cannot surpass mere self-awareness similar to the freedom of the stoics. For Hegel, who rejects the stoic view of freedom, real freedom requires a basic transformation of the master–slave relation.

Hegel envisages several ways in which this relation can be transformed. One, which ends in the exploitation and death of the slave, simply undoes the relation without realizing freedom other than in death. Another, which is close to the stoic view of freedom, occurs when the slave becomes self-aware, or self-conscious, through the object he produces in his work. For this reason, Hegel depicts the slave as the truth of the master–slave relation, which is forever basically changed when the slave becomes self-aware. In Lukács's breakthrough to Hegelian Marxism, this Hegelian insight is restated in a theory of self-consciousness as a revolutionary force. This same idea has suggested to generations of Marxists that a society based on inequality, such as capitalism, is fundamentally unstable, unable to endure, certain to change.

A third outcome of the master–slave relation is when individuals relate to each other, no longer as master and slave on different levels, but as co-equals on the same level who acknowledge each other, for instance through the love of each for the other, or what Hegel later calls mutual recognition. A fourth way to consider the relation between people as leading to freedom is when they share the same, or closely similar, aims within a social structure, such as the family, or again when the interests of the individual, or civil society, coincide with or are realized in the state.³⁰ In the latter case, as Hegel suggests in the paragraph from the *Philosophy of Right* with which Marx opens his discussion (§261), what the former calls “concrete freedom” is realized, since the particular interests of individuals in the family and civil society coincide with those of the state.

Marx’s view of the historical realization of freedom does not differ from Hegel’s in the attention to economy as such, nor in the concern to grasp modern political economy, nor again in sensitivity to the effects of modern industrial society on individual workers, nor even in the belief that real human freedom depends on economic factors, nor finally in dismay at the results of the industrial revolution. Its difference rather lies in the relatively greater explanatory role, in a word the explanatory priority, accorded to economic factors over all others, as well as in a more critical attitude toward political economy.

Hegel, who partly measures freedom in terms of recognition, accords more weight than Marx to legal recognition. Unlike Hegel, Marx in the last instance, as a result of his base–superstructure model, subordinates legality and everything else to economics. Like Hegel, Marx is concerned with progress, hence social freedom. Even more than Hegel, who also takes economic factors into account, he interprets freedom as a function of the development of the economy. He sees the need to liberate individuals from the economic yoke of modern industrial society, to bring about a post-economic realm of freedom, in order to develop their capacities in ways unconnected with economics. His attitude toward capitalism is always balanced, never unbalanced, mixing praise with blame, criticism with acknowledgment of positive features. The persistently negative aspect of his discussion of modern industrial society derives from his very clear view, which remains up to date, of the often horrendous effect on individuals of modern liberal capitalism. As a consequence of private ownership of the means of production, people are forced into undesirable roles which neither they nor anyone would freely assume. Marx is clear and persuasive that the overriding pressures to accumulate capital which are built into capitalism often carry with them a perhaps unavoidable, but certainly horrendous, social cost. Yet he also points

out that suffering in modern industrial society is balanced through the development of the means of production. And he holds out the prospect that what he sees as the intrinsic instability of capitalism will lead to a very different, post-capitalist society in which the means of production will no longer be privately owned, hence eliminating or at least reducing economic pressure to accumulate capital.

Marx's binary model is most clearly visible in such early writings as the *Paris Manuscripts* and the *German Ideology*. It is less visible in later writings, where the emphasis increasingly falls on understanding the intrinsic logic of modern industrial society. This model presupposes a distinction in kind between forms of society, correlated with two broad historical periods. Let us call them, for present purposes, human prehistory and human history. Prehistory is the series of social formations ending in capitalism, the stage in which economic imperatives subordinate everything else, including any realistic perspective of meeting human needs surpassing mere existence needs – which are often euphemistically referred to as food, clothing, and shelter – to the accumulation of capital. Marx further envisages a post-capitalist society which, in early writings, he calls communism, a term with no more than a purely linguistic relation, or the word in common, to forms of “official” Marxism. In this future stage, human beings will supposedly retake control of the economic sector of society which from that time on will be subordinated to the needs of all people everywhere. In the Marxian scheme, capitalism is justified, despite its social cost, as the only real way to bring about the development of the means of production required for the transition from capitalism to communism in which, as the slogan goes, all contribute according to their capacities and receive according to their needs.

Throughout history, human beings have been understood in different ways: as social animals, as capable of reasoned speech, as made in God's image, and so on. Marx understands human beings, as he understands society, from an economic angle of vision. In Marx's position, human freedom has two main prerequisites. First, it requires the prior development of the means of production. Second, it requires later establishment of human control on the economic process as a result of which people will be freed, or at least made relatively freer, from the economic yoke of modern industrial society. Marx is not, of course, saying that when the capitalists lose power, we can forget about economics. That would be puerile utopianism, hence wholly unrealistic. Basic human needs will still have to be met. But when they have been met, time will be available for other, non-basic needs, such as education, travel, different tasks, etc. Yet, to stress Marx's point once again, the precondition of loosening the economic fetters prevalent throughout

modern society is the development of its economic preconditions by growing the economy.

What kind or extent of freedom can we expect in a post-capitalist society? On this very important point Marx is cautious, more so than one might expect. He entertains various ideas in various places in his writings. In the early *Paris Manuscripts* he argues for the “reconciliation” of human beings with nature, which is described, romantically enough, as man’s other body. Marx’s suggestion is that when people are freed from the constraints of earning a living the various senses will develop in new and different ways, all of which will lead to bringing out the individuality of each of us. The central idea seems to be that all of us have capacities, which are not necessarily economically useful, but which could be developed in a post-capitalist society. Division of labor, which is important in a society driven by the economic imperative to maximize profit, prevents, or at least impedes, the realization of capacities not financially useful for the owners of the means of production. This theme remained on Marx’s mind. Slightly later in the *German Ideology*, in an equally romantic passage, he takes up the idea of the many-sided individual (implicit in the *Paris Manuscripts*) in a future society in which there would be no division of labor. In such a society, Marx imagines that each person could do whatever they wanted at different times without regard to competence or training. Still another suggestion from his later period emerges late in the third volume of *Capital*, published after his death, in an important passage worth evoking here.

Whether Marx’s position remains the same throughout his writings or changes in other than minimal ways is a theme for scholars. Those inclined to doubt – as well as those who assert – continuity in Marx’s position need only glance at chapter 48, “The trinity formula.” Like the *Paris Manuscripts*, which many years earlier began with consideration of the wages of labor, the profit of capital and the rent of land, this chapter starts with the three categories of capital, profit, and land, or ground-rent, from which it takes its name. In recalling that capital is not a thing, but a social relation in a particular phase of society, which is manifest in a thing, the commodity, Marx notes that so-called vulgar economy interprets and defends, but does not criticize, modern industrial society. In a departure from his effort in the *Paris Manuscripts*, Marx now criticizes the trinity formula before arriving at a passage on surplus labor and surplus value. He points out that the wealth of society does not depend on the length, but rather on the productivity, of the work. Then, abruptly changing topics, he provides what must stand as his mature, final view of real freedom in a stunning passage. According to Marx, freedom, which only begins where forced labor ceases, consists in establish-

ing control over the economic process in conditions favorable to human beings. Although real needs must still, and will always need to be, met through the economic process, that is, within the realm of necessity, beyond it lies what Marx now calls the realm of freedom. In suggesting that its prerequisite lies in shortening the working day, he implies that as the goal of history real freedom lies in free time. Here is the passage, which must be cited at length:

In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labor which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production. Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite. (XXXVII, 807)

Many things could be said about this remarkable passage. Perhaps the most obvious is that, after many years of fighting for communism, Marx here just as obviously abandons it as a precondition of real human freedom. Freedom no longer lies in a break with a previous stage of society, that is in revolution, but in a basic improvement in the conditions of life, or in reform. In a word, Marx here substitutes reform for revolution. Marxism has traditionally been hostile to mere reform.³¹ Yet in this passage Marx seems to hold out hope that modern industrial society and real human freedom are in principle compatible if and only if human beings can reestablish control over the economic process, which is the real master in capitalist society. In that case, the aim becomes to reorient society away from the accumulation of capital, which stultifies the achievement of human goals, in order to free people for human development, which lies in realizing potentials which may have no financial use whatsoever. In denying that human ends can be

identified with the accumulation of capital, Marx suggests that people must be freed for development beyond the economic process by being freed from its domination.

Hegel and Marx's Critique of Political Economy

It is not surprising that Marx's critique of Hegel is based from beginning to end on a different, more critical view of political economy than Hegel's, more precisely on a different view of property. Hegel, who was knowledgeable about political economy, was more critical about the results of modern industrial society, for instance its obvious failure to solve the problem of poverty, than about contemporary economic science. He certainly goes well beyond the often very complacent attitude of political economists from Smith to the present day in considering the often wretched, but also useful, consequences of modern capitalism. As already noted, Smith deplores but is not otherwise concerned with the persistent problem of poverty which Hegel regards as a potential source of social unrest. But unlike Marx, since he is not concerned to revise current economic theory, he remains within its orbit in at least that sense. Marx was not only more knowledgeable, but also more critical, about political economy. An exhaustive study of Marx's critique of Hegel, beyond the limits of this book, would show that all, or virtually all, of Marx's specific objections to Hegel finally point to differences concerning a correct appreciation of the role and nature of political economy, especially property. Conversely, Marx's critique of political economy is not inconsistent, but rather consistent, with Hegel's historical perspective. Marx's critique of political economy raises many different issues, centered finally on his thoroughly Hegelian insight that political economy wrongly overlooks the inherently historical dimension of society, hence of political economy itself.

In turning now to Marx's critique of political economy, we will need to distinguish between doctrinal differences, minor corrections concerning matters of detail, and objections to the intrinsically ahistorical character of modern political economy, which preoccupies Marx as soon as he begins to write on the subject. An example of a doctrinal difference is his stress against Smith and those influenced by him as early as the *Paris Manuscripts*, and in all his later writings, that the institution of private property results not only in profit for the capitalist but in alienation for the worker. Matters of detail, which abound, include the complaint against J. S. Mill that automation is not meant to make work easier but rather to increase profit. By far the most important element in Marx's critique of political economy is his objection to

its supposedly ahistorical misrepresentation of modern industrial society and society in general.

Marx's critique of political economy focuses on the economic conception of categories on a number of different levels. Smith and others take an optimistic view of modern industrial society in which an invisible hand supposedly brings it about that, when each works only for himself, that is, in order to realize his own personal goals, everyone benefits. In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx uses the standard categories of political economy to argue two main points. On the one hand, it is false that everyone benefits; in fact in all circumstances workers suffer in modern society. On the other hand, for reasons intrinsic to it, modern industrial society is only stable at best in the short run but not in the long run, hence, doomed to transform itself into another very different social form.

Following Hegel's insistence on the historicity of knowledge in all its forms, Marx combats the mistaken tendency to depict economic categories as transhistorical. In Marx's opinion they are always basically linked to the historical moment, namely to specific economic formations existing at a particular time and place. In *The Poverty of Philosophy* he contends that economic categories are not fixed and immutable relationships, but merely theoretical expressions depicting transitory, mutable relationships. Division of labor, for instance, only arises as the consequence of competition. In the introduction to the *Grundrisse* he criticizes political economy for isolating production from distribution, and for representing production as manifesting so-called suprahistorical laws whereas distribution is wholly arbitrary.

He criticizes political economy for overlooking the real contradictions of modern industrial society. Since they are not confined to our way of looking at things, but are located within society itself, they rather result in periodic crises. In the *Paris Manuscripts* he points to the contradiction between owning and not owning private property. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, in the discussion of the commodity, he notes the contradiction between use-value – in which labor time is “concretized” in the form of a thing – and exchange value which permits a commodity to be exchanged for money. In *The German Ideology* and again in *Capital* he identifies the real contradiction between social relations and productive forces as producing the collisions of history. He develops this criticism in his conception of periodic crises. In the *Grundrisse* he further develops the idea of periodic crises, which will supposedly culminate in a final cataclysmic crisis. In the second afterword to *Capital* he claims that at present we are in the early stages of a great crisis of capitalism.

Hegel and Marx's Theory of Political Economy

Marx's use of Hegel in formulating his own theory of modern industrial society, particularly political economy, is similar to his Hegelian critique of political economy. He is increasingly concerned with historical matters throughout his writings. Examples include the account of forms of ownership in *The German Ideology*, the historical accounts in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (e.g., the history of commodities, the history of money), study of the rise of technology and an account of primitive accumulation in *Capital*, the very detailed discussion of prior *Theories of Surplus Value* in that study, as well as the enormous number of historical references scattered throughout his writings.

Marx outlines the theoretical basis of his revised historical view of the category as an economic tool in discussion of the method of political economy in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*. He rejects the procedure of beginning from an imaginary concrete, which is analyzable into simpler ideas, in favor of beginning with simple ideas in order to rise to a concrete totality which appears as a result of many determinations. He points out that the apparently simple category of labor, which Smith very usefully considers as labor in general, is in fact the product of, and hence only valid within, a given set of historical relations. For it is only in modern industrial society, which is dominated by capital, that it is appropriate to take this category as the starting point and end point of economic analysis.

There is a straight line leading from the view of private property as central, which Marx raises against Hegel in his earliest philosophical writings, to the later claim for the priority of the economic base over the superstructure. His own theory of political economy emerges in stages in his writings. In the earliest writings on Hegel, he stresses an economic approach to private property as central, against Hegel's approach to property in general within a legal framework. In the *Paris Manuscripts* he has already seen that private property is central to modern industrial society. *The German Ideology* provides a historical account of the rise of modern private property, as well as a theory of the economic production of ideology, or false consciousness. In the introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* he proposes a three-stage model of modern industrial society, including the economic base, the non-economic superstructure, and consciousness of both. Marx is clearly suggesting that individuals come into a preexisting situation, whose economic base conditions the social, political, and intellectual aspects of life. This is the counterpart of the more famous passage in "The Eight-

eenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," where he observes that men make their own history, but not as they please, rather under conditions inherited from the past.³²

This theory is developed in detail in later, more economic writings. Its main features – including the labor theory of value, the distinction between use-value and exchange value, the theory of fetishism of commodities, the historical character of economic categories, the periodically recurring crises of overproduction, and so on – all follow from Marx's development of the Hegelian insight that in the modern world individuals meet their needs through economic activity within the sphere of civil society. Unlike political economy, or orthodox political economy, Marx proposes a theory of the economic basis of society as intrinsically historical, hence mutable and transitory, thus not as the *terminus ad quem* but as merely another stage in the development of human beings within a sociohistorical context.

Marx the Hegelian

Generations of Marxists have understood Marx as reacting against and leaving Hegel behind. Is Marx finally a Hegelian? The answer depends on the meaning of the question. The main difference between Kant and Hegel can be summarized in a single word: history. If to be a Hegelian is to be a historical thinker, then the answer must certainly be affirmative. What separates Hegel from almost everyone else in the prior philosophical tradition is the enormous emphasis he puts on the historical process. Marx is unquestionably a historical thinker, with the possible exception of Hegel perhaps the most historical thinker of modern times. His critiques of Hegel and political economy, as well as his own theory, presuppose Hegel's profoundly historical angle of vision.

The obvious objection to this way of reading Marx is that throughout his writings he not only criticizes political economy but also Hegel as basically ahistorical, as unconcerned with concrete historical phenomena, as the source of abstract and finally false views of history. Marx and the Marxists argue that in underestimating the economic component Hegel misconceives history, for which he finally substitutes a false analysis. According to Lukács, in failing to discover the real subject within history Hegel is led to a mythological conception beyond it, whereas Marx discovers the real historical subject in the proletariat.³³ Yet this view is itself mythological in suggesting the proletariat is the solution to history, or that it can show the way out of prehistory to human history.

Marx's critique of Hegel overestimates the difference between their two positions, in part because he uncritically follows a tendentious right-wing reading of Hegel as the basis of his objection. Hegel is not easy to comprehend. It is a truism to say that he is on the shortlist of the most important but most difficult of all philosophers. Marx's position took shape within the young Hegelian reaction to orthodox and right-wing forms of Hegelianism. He undoubtedly possesses a deeper and broader grasp of Hegel than any of his young Hegelian colleagues, including Feuerbach. But he also certainly shares and develops their generally anti-theological critique of his great predecessor.

In defense of Marx, one can say that, after the prospect of an academic career faded from view, his intent was never to produce scholarly treatises, even if he did just that in magnificent fashion in his later economic writings, above all in *Capital*. His intent was rather to change the world through political action. Had he devoted more scholarly care to Hegel, he would certainly have been capable of coming closer to understanding Hegel's position than he actually did. Yet he did not, for reasons on which we can only speculate: perhaps because that was not his bent, or perhaps because of the press of circumstances which turned him in another direction.

For whatever reason, Marx's critique of Hegel presupposes a right-wing, theological reading of the latter's position, which he refutes through a left-wing, anti-theological reading. A right-wing reading, presupposed, for instance, in Feuerbach's transformational critique of Hegel, typically depicts the latter's position as a disguised theology in which God is the central actor. In Marx's opinion, which rests on a right-wing reading of Hegel, Hegel supposedly errs in substituting a fictitious subject, or the state as the manifestation of God, for the real subject in society, which can be traced to private property.

Marx's relation to Hegel is two-fold. On the one hand, he presupposes that Hegel does not take into account the real historical nature of the social context, particularly the economic structure of society, since he adopts an abstract philosophical approach which is simply inadequate to grasp social practice. On the other, he accepts the main thrust of Hegel's own contention, in the wake of the great French Revolution, that everything is finally historical. An example is Marx's much discussed and important series of comments on the method of political economy in the introduction to the *Grundrisse*. The proposed contrast between an abstract, or imaginary, concrete, attributed to Hegel, and a real concrete built up out of simple conceptions linked to the historical moment is based on a basic misreading of Hegel's position. Like Marx, Hegel favors the alternative which Marx in effect opposes to his (false) reading of the latter's view.

It would be an obvious mistake to deny, or to diminish, differences separating Marx from Hegel. I am not saying, and I do not mean to imply, that Marx's position is the same as Hegel's. That would be indefensible and insensitive to the central characteristics of both positions. My point is rather that Marx's view takes shape and finally remains within the Hegelian orbit, whose main thrust is circumscribed by a shared concern with history. In discussion about Marx stress is mainly placed on differences – not in degree, but in kind – between Marx and Hegel. As a result, the relation of Marx to Hegel appears wholly, or at least mainly, negative. Marxists read Marx as an anti-Hegelian, but I read him as a Hegelian. If Marx is finally a Hegelian, it is relevant to reconsider the three dichotomies in the Marxist tendency to distinguish overly sharply between Hegel and Marx in respect to idealism vs. materialism, ideology vs. science or, in a specification of the prior alternative, philosophy vs. political economy.

"Idealism" is a term used to characterize a great many, often very different, positions beginning with Plato and including Kant, post-Kantian German philosophy, British idealism, linguistic idealism, and so on.³⁴ In Kant, idealism is linked to Kant's so-called Copernican revolution in philosophy; that is, to the "constructivist" view that we do not and cannot know the way the mind-independent world is, but that in some sense, and as a necessary condition of knowledge, we "construct" or "produce" what we know. A short-hand way of making this point is to say that there is a distinction between appearance, or things as they appear, and mind-independent reality, or things as they are, and (legitimate) knowledge claims are limited to the former.

Marx, who rarely talks about materialism, never does so in a way allowing a consistent doctrine to be extracted from his writings. If materialism and idealism are thought of as true contraries, which exhaust all possible positions, then as the denial of idealism materialism would require the affirmation of an empiricist claim that we can and do know the world as it is, hence go beyond appearance. If the distinction is drawn in this way, Marxism is clearly committed to materialism. But it is just as clear that Marx, as distinguished from Marxism, is committed to idealism. This commitment is obvious in the methodological passage repeatedly discussed according to which we never know the world otherwise than through its reconstruction on the level of mind.

The main formulation of the distinction between idealism and science occurs in *The German Ideology*, where a conception of ideology, or false consciousness, is (implicitly) contrasted with the alternative (correct) view of modern industrial society. The idea that Marx's view is science is routinely urged in Marxism since Engels, through various descriptions of Marx's

supposed break with philosophy. Any claim that Marx's position is beyond philosophy fails for a number of reasons, of which two can be cited here. On the one hand, it simply cannot be shown that philosophy in general is false or merely ideological, either in that it provides a false view of the social world or that it serves to preserve the way things are, for instance through reinforcing modern capitalism. It seems obvious that, like other segments of society, philosophy includes people on the right and on the left, those content with the status quo and who revere the past, those critical of it and who look to the future, and many in the political middle who are less easily categorized. Hence, the idea that philosophers as a class are devoted to opposing social justice has little to recommend it. On the other hand, if we admit that Marx formulates a view of political economy and that political economy is a science, it only follows that Marx's position is science if a strict distinction can be drawn between philosophy and science. But if this is possible at all, it is not possible for Marx. For throughout his writings Marx's concern with political economy consistently surpasses the limits, however drawn, of economic science, above all in his historical reinterpretation of economics within the wider context of the evolution of society.

This leads to three conclusions, which can simply be stated. First, despite his undoubted interest in and contribution to political economy, Marx's conception of political economy presupposes numerous (extra-scientific) philosophical features. Second, the most plausible general description of Marx is as an idealist philosopher, more specifically as a Hegelian. Finally, the main Hegelian legacy in Marx's position concerns the transition to a historical conception of human beings and society.

Notes

- 1 MacGregor contends that Hegel is a more radical thinker than Marx, and that Marx's replacement of Hegel's view of private property meant that Marx's ideal society lacks a state and most of the institutions that insure personal freedom and prevent arbitrary misrule. See David MacGregor, *Hegel, Marx, and the English State*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- 2 See Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution*, trans. P. S. Falla, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, vol. 1: *The Founders*, pp. 56–80.
- 3 See Michel Henry, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- 4 See Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth Century Thought*, trans. David E. Green, Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1967.

- 5 See Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966.
- 6 See Klaus Hartmann, *Die Marxsche Theorie. Eine philosophische Untersuchung zu den Hauptschriften*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970.
- 7 See Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.
- 8 See Dieter Wolf, *Hegel und Marx. Zur Bewegungsstruktur des absoluten Geistes und des Kapitals*, Hamburg: VSA-Verlag, 1979; and Oskar Cöster, *Hegel und Marx: Struktur und Modalität ihrer Begreifff politisch-sozialer Vernunft in terms einer "Wirklichkeit" der "Einheit" von "allgemeinem" und "besonderem Interesse"*, Bonn: Bouvier, 1983.
- 9 An example is provided by Harris, whose monumental study of Hegel's *Phenomenology* never mentions Marx. See H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Ladder*, 2 vols., Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.
- 10 Smith, who points to many Marxist studies of Hegel in suggesting that the only area which remains unexhausted is the role of Hegelian dialectical logic in *Capital*, at least devotes a short chapter to introducing what he calls certain Hegelian motifs. See Tony Smith, *The Logic of Marx's Capital*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- 11 For the argument that Lenin had deep insight into Hegel, see Kevin Anderson, *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995.
- 12 For philosophical discussion of this theme, see Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973; Georg Lukács, *The Young Hegel: Studies in the Relations between Dialectics and Economics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1975; Georg Lukács, *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*, 2 vols., ed. Frank Benseler, Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1984, 1986.
- 13 See Karl Korsch, *Marxismus und Philosophie*, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966.
- 14 See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. James H. Nichols, New York: Basic Books, 1969.
- 15 See Predrag Vranicki, *Geschichte des Marxismus*, 2 vols., Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972, 1974.
- 16 See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and Walter Cerf, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977.
- 17 See "Fragmente historischer und politischer Studien aus der Berner und Frankfurter Zeit", §13, in G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971, vol. 1, p. 439.
- 18 See *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, §188, p. 126.
- 19 See *ibid*, §208, p. 134.
- 20 See *ibid*, §217, pp. 139–40.
- 21 See *ibid*, §218, p. 140.
- 22 See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 9, 1451b5–11.

- 23 See Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Menschheit*, 4 vols., Riga, 1784–91; trans. T. O. Churchill as *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, London, 1800.
- 24 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, New York: American Home Library, 1902; Hegel, *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Robert Hartman, Indianapolis, IN: LLA, 1953. See, for discussion, Jean Hyppolite, *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1983.
- 25 See Joachim Ritter, *Hegel and the French Revolution: Essays on the Philosophy of Right*, trans. R. D. Winfield, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982.
- 26 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Abridged Student Edition*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, ed. Tom Rockmore, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1996.
- 27 See *The Social Contract*, in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, ed. Lester G. Crocker, New York: Washington Square Books, 1971, p. 7.
- 28 See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, London: Allen and Unwin, 1930, p. 181.
- 29 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, §209, p. 127.
- 30 This is the basis of Sartre's effort to understand what he calls the transition from seriality to the group-in-fusion. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, Paris: Gallimard, 1960.
- 31 For a reformist approach to socialism, see Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, New York: Schocken, 1961.
- 32 See "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in CW vol. 11, p. 101.
- 33 See Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 140–9.
- 34 See Nicholas Rescher, "Idealism," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, ed. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994, pp. 187–91.

6

Marx the Hegelian

Marx is our greatest theoretician of modern industrial society. In the preceding chapter, I stressed that his broad, complex vision of the modern world is based on a series of Hegelian philosophical concepts. In this chapter, I will stress that, despite his criticism of Hegel, his own theories are broadly Hegelian.

The claim that Marx's position is Hegelian in any important sense is controversial. Attention to this relation in Marxist Hegelianism was reversed in structuralist and analytic Marxism. The denial of any more than transitory Hegelian influence on Marx has been a staple of the French Marxist structuralist approach in writers such as Althusser, Etienne Balibar,¹ and Maurice Godelier.² Analytic Marxism which developed in G. A. Cohen's wake, tends to be generally uninformed about, and certainly minimizes, Marx's relation to Hegel.³ The tendency to look away from Hegel in studying Marx affects even non-Marxists, who have no ideological ax to grind. Daniel Brudney, a non-Marxist, restates the canonical Marxist claim that Marx was concerned to leave philosophy in examining his relation to Bruno Bauer and Feuerbach.⁴

A Marxist reading of Marx as an anti-Hegelian and as an anti-philosopher implies that his position is *sui generis*, neither fish nor fowl, unlike and unrelated to the philosophical tradition from which it emerged. From this perspective, Marx's position appears unclear, difficult to assess or even to categorize, comparable to nothing else. Yet if, on the contrary, Marx is considered as a Hegelian, hence as a philosopher, then his contribution can be assessed on standard philosophical grounds – such as strength of argument, originality, ability of his theories to provide convincing responses for standard problems – against the contributions of other philosophers.

This chapter will consider Marx's contribution to a generally Hegelian conception of philosophy. I am not arguing that Marx was Hegel. It would be a mistake to conflate his and Hegel's rather different positions. His

philosophical contribution lies rather in ways in which he innovates, hence departs from, his great predecessor, the most historical of prior philosophers. I believe that most, perhaps all, Marx's contributions to philosophy – including his conceptions of alienation, political economy as historical, modern industrial society, view of knowledge as historical, and so on – derive from his economic approach to society, hence to social history. Hegel differs radically from Kant through his view of history, including the historical nature of philosophy and knowledge. Accordingly, this chapter will begin with remarks on the historical transformation of German idealism in Hegel, before turning to Marx's own distinctive view of historical phenomena, and ending with some further comments about Marx's philosophical contribution through his relation to Hegel and to the current philosophical discussion.

Kant's Copernican Revolution in Philosophy

Kant studies epistemological themes from the traditional ahistorical perspective. His so-called Copernican revolution in philosophy, a term he never used but one which is routinely applied to his position, can be understood in terms of a distinction between formal, transcendental, and dialectical logic.⁵ Formal logic concerns the principles or propositions and deductive reasoning. Transcendental logic studies the conditions of knowledge whatsoever. Dialectical logic, as developed in Hegel, reflects on thought to reveal its necessary categorical structure.

Kant's critical philosophy is intended as ahistorical, transcendental logic, more precisely as an elucidation of the most general conditions of the conditions of knowledge whatsoever.⁶ His strategy depends on his reading of the rise of modern science. Kant adapts the Copernican approach to astronomy, which he regards as central to the rise of modern science and as the basis of a general (philosophical) theory of knowledge. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* his key move lies in rethinking the relation of the knowing subject to the object of knowledge along Copernican lines. In a famous letter from the beginning of his so-called critical period to his friend and colleague Marcus Herz, Kant describes his concern to understand the relation of the representation (*Vorstellung*) to the object.⁷ In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he claims that experience and knowledge of objects are possible if and only if the object we know is in some sense "produced" by the subject as a condition of knowledge on the grounds that "reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own plan."⁸

Kant's ahistorical perspective changes sharply after the French Revolu-

tion in the writings of the post-Kantian idealists, who are all historical thinkers, including Fichte, Schelling, and above all Hegel. In what sense is Hegel's position Copernican? The answer lies in the way in which it continues and builds on Kant's basic "constructivist" claim that knowledge is possible if and only if we "produce" what we know. Kant, who contends that the subject must produce the object it knows, is unable to explain how that occurs. He concedes his inability to describe this activity, which he refers to in a passage on the schematism – the faculty through which the categories are brought to bear on the contents of the sensory manifold – as "a secret art residing in the depths of the human soul, an art whose true stratagems we shall hardly ever divine from nature and lay bare before ourselves."⁹ Fichte and then Hegel for the first time describe that activity in terms of a revised conception of the subject, not as an abstract condition of knowledge, but rather as one or more finite human beings situated within the social world. In abandoning the idea of an epistemological subject in favor of a real finite human subject, Fichte and Hegel open the way to a rethinking of philosophical problems on a social and historical basis.

Hegel and History

Hegel develops Kant's Copernican turn in his theory of history as human history. History includes a sequence of events as well as a narrative, or interpretive, account or study of them. The term "philosophy of history," which was coined by François Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694–1778), often refers indiscriminately to reflection on what happens in history as well as to historiography, or the theory of the writing of history, as distinguished from a theory of knowledge as (intrinsically) historical.¹⁰

Philosophy of history before Hegel concentrates on philosophical reflection on the course of historical events. In *The New Science* (1725), Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) argues that the development of all peoples passes through three stages. In his *Essay on the Customs and Spirit of Nations* (1756), Voltaire describes history as man's struggle for culture and progress. Herder, Kant's student, saw human history as developing toward full humanity. Like Kant, Gottfried Ephraim Lessing (1729–81) and Fichte see history as the realization of divine providence, of God's plan for the education of the human race, which will ultimately result in its perfection.

Kant discussed history in several of his minor writings. In the eighth part of the "Idea For a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent" he proposes to view the history of the human race as the fulfillment of a hidden plan of

nature.¹¹ But in general his conceptions of philosophy and knowledge are basically ahistorical. Fichte offers a theory of history but no theory of historical knowledge.¹² Hegel greatly accelerates the post-Kantian turn toward history. As mentioned, he largely invents the history of philosophy as we know it. All later historians of philosophy walk in his footsteps. And he offers theories about how to write history and of knowledge as historical.

In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel distinguishes between original history, reflective history, and philosophical history. Original history is the writing of history by someone located within it, such as Herodotus or Thucydides. Reflective history, which is further subdivided into four types (general or universal history, pragmatic history, critical history or the modern German historical method, and the history of special topics such as art, law, or religion), records and interprets the deeds of the past through the spirit of a later age. Philosophical history studies the rational development of (human) spirit in historical time. Hegel discusses in some detail his view of the concept, its relation to other forms of knowledge, and the proper approach to treating the history of philosophy.

Spirit, Hegel's main philosophical discovery, is his suggested alternative to Kant's view of reason. Hegel's complex concept cannot be adequately described in simple terms.¹³ Suffice it to say that, if things are in time, then human beings are in history. Hegel understands spirit, or the social reason typical of human beings, as freedom. He distinguishes between the idea of history and its realization. He contends that "World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom" and describes "the actualization of this freedom as the final purpose of the world."¹⁴ He contemplates the realization of this idea on the levels of the individual as both the subject and object of history, and in the state. As concerns the latter, he considers the law, the constitution, and religion. He suggests that the vigor of a state depends on the fact that its interests coincide with those of its citizens.¹⁵ He argues that man is an end in himself in virtue of his reason, or freedom, although the results of even the simplest act often surpass our intentions. He coins the idea of the world-historical individual to designate those few people who, like Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon, perhaps unwittingly realize general historical aims through their individual actions. According to Hegel, the three successive phases of the development of freedom include an immersion of spirit in national life, then consciousness of freedom, followed by pure universality of freedom.¹⁶

Contradiction and Marx's Economic Approach to History

Marx and Hegel hold related, complementary views of human history. For both, human history turns on the difficult realization of human freedom. The main difference is that Hegel limits his discussion to phenomenological description and conceptual analysis of the stages of the realization of freedom. Although he discusses political economy, he does not offer a causal economic framework, which Marx provides and discusses in detail.

One way to characterize the difference is by analogy with the difference between Copernicus's kinematic, or abstract, and Newton's dynamic, causal explanation of planetary motion. Hegel concentrates on describing the institutions within which human freedom is realized; Marx concentrates on an account of the social forces that transform society through what, by analogy with Hegel's view of logical contradiction, I will be calling his view of (objective) social contradiction.

To understand Marx's view of objective contradiction, it will be useful to make a few, but only a few, remarks about Hegel's difficult view of logic.¹⁷ Both Marx and Hegel detect a close relation between concepts of dialectic, negation, and contradiction. Roughly speaking, "dialectic" concerns the dynamic interaction between various factors operative within a situation which, through their interaction, bring about its transformation to a different situation. An example might be a change in conceptual perspective resulting from the comparison of a particular theory with its object as a result of which both the theory of the object and the object of the theory change. We know that the increasing difficulty in fitting observational data to a geocentric theory of astronomy eventually led to the adoption of the (Copernican) heliocentric theory of astronomy. As a result, both our understanding of it and our theories about it greatly changed.

After Hegel's death, his students disagreed about the nature and import of dialectic in his position. Karl Rosenkranz (1807–79), his biographer, a conservative philosopher who later wrote a book on Hegel as the philosopher of the German nation,¹⁸ depicted dialectic as bringing about the harmony of opposites.¹⁹ Others were less generous. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), one of Hegel's most ferocious opponents, who considered him to be a mere charlatan,²⁰ criticized dialectic as mere galimatias, as arrant nonsense.²¹ Adolph Trendelenburg (1802–72), a logician, criticized it on Aristotelian grounds.²² Hegel's left-wing students saw dialectic as referring to a less conservative, more critical doctrine. In the early 1840s, Bakunin thought of

objective contradiction as the main category, the ruling essence of the time.²³ Not surprisingly, Marx agreed with Hegel's other left-wing students in understanding dialectic through contradiction. In a footnote more than half-way through the first volume of *Capital*, in a critical remark on J. S. Mill's effort to appropriate ideas from Ricardo and Senior, Marx says of Mill that "he [i.e., Mill] feels at sea in the Hegelian contradiction, the source of all dialectic" (XXXV, 592n.).

Hegel's left-wing students did not import the doctrine of contradiction into Hegel, who mentions it often but in ways which are unclear. In the *Philosophy of Right* "contradiction" occurs only in two passages: in a remark about the contradiction between subjectivity and objectivity in morality,²⁴ and in a further remark about the development of the finite as concerns necessity and contingency.²⁵ To be sure, in the *Encyclopedia* he stated that "Generally speaking, it is contradiction that moves the world, and it is ridiculous to say that contradiction cannot be thought."²⁶

It was unclear what Hegel meant and how he thought contradiction was active in the world. But it is at least clear that he meant to consider all reality, including history, from a dialectical perspective. Hegel is sparing in his references to contradictions in history. But in his *Philosophy of History* he shows how the idea of contradiction can be applied to historical phenomena. In discussion of ancient Egypt, he remarks that its task was to unite opposing elements (Babylonian, Syrian, and so on).²⁷ He sees Egypt as a precarious unity, as an unresolved contradiction between nature and spirit.²⁸ He further detects a series of unresolved contradictions in the Church during the middle ages: in subjective spirit as witnessing absolute spirit and as finite and existential; in the relation in the Church as such in which the true spirit exists in people, whereas the Church has only the relation of a teacher of this cult; and in the Church which is immensely rich but also despises wealth.²⁹

There are different types of contradiction: logical, formal, subjective, objective, and so on. According to Aristotle, what today would be called a logical contradiction, more precisely a violation of the law of non-contradiction, prevents rational discourse.³⁰ Hegel, who discusses many different types of contradiction, distinguishes explicitly between subjective and objective contradiction. A contradiction is subjective if it concerns no more than our way of talking about the world, but not the mind-independent world itself; it is objective if it does not concern our way of talking about the world, but the world itself. According to Hegel, Kant's antinomies, or contradictions of reason, are only subjective or "within" subjectivity, but not located within the world.³¹

This distinction is as old as the pre-Socratic thinkers. Zeno of Elea (about

490–430 BCE) identifies subjective contradictions in arguing that motion is impossible. Heraclitus of Ephesus (540–475 BCE) identifies objective contradictions in arguing that the tension of opposites – he had no word for contradiction – provides the unity as well as the change of the world.³² In reacting against Kant, Hegel revives the pre-Socratic view of objective or ontological contradiction.

Hegel's view of contradiction is linked to his ideas of determinate negation and change. For Hegel, negation leads to contradiction, which in turn leads to change. In referring to Spinoza,³³ whom he misquotes, Hegel relates negation to contradiction through a slogan (*omnis determinatio est negatio*)³⁴ in indicating that all determination, or determinate being, that is everything which is, is a negation posited as an affirmation. Every particular thing is doubly contradictory. On the one hand, it is a unity of unity and diversity, or more precisely the unity of its own singular existence, that is, that it is, or that it exists, and its diverse properties, or how it is, in a word the unity of unity and difference. On the other hand, as a unity it excludes other things or possibilities. For instance, a triangle is neither a square nor any other geometrical figure.³⁵ For Hegel, *everything is inherently contradictory*.³⁶ The contradiction³⁷ intrinsic to determinate being drives the process of becoming which Hegel, like Heraclitus, finds present everywhere. Since everything is contradictory, and since contradiction is itself movement, or at the root of all movement,³⁸ everything constantly changes. Hegel specifically, but certainly obscurely enough, claims that contradiction moves the world.

As this is not a study of Hegel, there is no need to examine his difficult view in any detail. It is mentioned here because Hegel's idea of objective contradiction influenced the formulation of Marx's distinctive theory of history. In his view of contradiction, Hegel is concerned with change or movement of any kind whatsoever, including organic life, history, conceptual frameworks adequate to comprehend experience, and so on. Marx is more specifically concerned with historical change, which he regards as following from real, or objective, social contradictions situated within the social world.³⁹

Marx applies a form of this view to study the social world. The evolution of society from one stage to the next is impelled by social forces. According to Marx, capitalism is fraught with internal contradictions between the forces of production and social relations which, over time, will result in economic crises, and finally in a giant economic crisis, greater than its predecessors, which will transform capitalism into communism.

Like Hegel, Marx more often speaks of contradiction than of dialectic. In his causal explanation of historical phenomena, Marx adapts Hegel's conception of objective contradiction. There is an important distinction between

Hegelian, Marxian, and Marxist views of contradiction. Marx's idea of (social) contradiction differs from Hegel's more sweeping conception, which is the basis of the very different Marxist view of dialectic as the science of the general laws of motion of nature, human society and thought.⁴⁰

Marx's approach to modern industrial society through economic contradiction develops early but gradually in his writings. He seems to have had an idea of objective social contradiction very early, as soon as he began to write. In general, Marx's attention to contradiction, a constant theme in his writings, becomes increasingly concrete, increasingly economic. It is already present, at least in attenuated form, in the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'," right at the beginning, in the critical remarks on unresolved tensions between the spheres of civil society and personal welfare, the family and civil society, and the state (III, 6). In "On the Jewish Question," where he says little about private property, he identifies a whole series of contradictions between Christians and Jews, religious prejudice and political emancipation, and membership in the political community and civil society, culminating in the contradiction in Bauer's concern to emancipate Jews without emancipating society in general. In the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right': Introduction," where he discusses the image of modern Germany in German philosophy, he identifies contradictions in the idea of abolishing philosophy without realizing it, between the redemption of humanity and capitalism, and between the proletariat and modern industrial society. At this point, Marx contemplates the need for the proletariat to overcome the tensions in existing society by dissolving existing society (III, 186–7).

The concept of objective contradiction is obviously presupposed in the *Paris Manuscripts* in remarks on the ripening of the internal contradictions of modern industrial society which, over time, will bring about its transformation. In the *Holy Family* this concept recurs in the claim that for economic reasons private property moves towards its own sublation (IV, 36). It recurs again in the theory of recurrent crises specific to capitalism in the *Grundrisse* and in all later writings.

In the *Paris Manuscripts* Marx for the first time focuses squarely on the contradictions in modern industrial society and in its representation by political economy. He identifies contradictions between capitalists and workers, or basically opposed interests, which express themselves in relation to wages, profit, and rent. Alienation denotes contradictions internal to the individual and with respect to others, which derive from the institution of private property, which defines capitalism. More generally, alienation points to the contradiction between capitalism and the fully human development of

individuals, or more generally between man and man and man and nature.

In the *Phenomenology* Hegel evokes "the tremendous power of the negative."⁴¹ In the *Paris Manuscripts*, where Marx discusses this work and where he praises Feuerbach as the only one to come to grips with Hegel in a serious way, he praises the latter for taking the relation of human beings to each other as the basis of his theory. He adopts Hegelian language to suggest that, in understanding "the negation of the negation," Feuerbach merely opposes theology to philosophy. For this reason, he hence remains within (Hegelian) philosophy, whose "negation of the negation" is no more than "the *abstract, logical, speculative* expression for the movement of history, which is not yet the *real* history of man as a given subject, but only the *act of creation*, the *history of the origin* of man" (III, 329). Marx repeats this point several pages later: "In Hegel, therefore, the negation of the negation is not the confirmation of the true essence, effected precisely through the negation of the pseudo-essence" (III, 339–40).

Marx's suggestion that Hegel's conception is abstract follows Hegel's own criticism of other views. Marx's remark implies that his effort in finding what he here calls real history requires rethinking Hegel's conception in more concrete fashion. He affirms that a real understanding of human history must show how human beings can lift themselves from a state of pseudo-essence to manifest their true essence, in short to fulfill themselves in and through history. For Marx, who reads Hegel against himself, the latter provides the necessary clue about how to rethink his concept of negativity in his view of man's self-creation as a process. Like Feuerbach, like every writer who tries to overcome Hegel, Marx rejects some aspects of Hegel in adopting and adapting others. In criticizing Hegel but in defending Hegelian phenomenology against Hegelian logic, Marx defends Hegel against himself. The irony lies in the fact that Marx is no more able than his young Hegelian colleagues to break with Hegel. Marx, who criticizes Feuerbach for remaining within Hegel's position, does so as well. For in criticizing Hegelianism on Hegelian grounds, he remains a Hegelian.

In succeeding texts, Marx focuses increasingly closely on specifically economic contradictions in modern industrial society. In *The German Ideology* division of labor, which is equated with different forms of ownership, provides a relatively concrete model of the evolution of society based on private property. Social evolution traverses a series of stages which illustrate the thesis that historical change follows from collisions between the forces of production and the organization of production. The same work provides a theory of ideology as false consciousness, hence in contradiction with social reality which, for that reason, provides for the continued existence of

modern capitalism. In short, capitalism continues to exist because it is not understood, or not fully understood, in fact mainly misunderstood, by its students.

The idea of objective economic contradiction runs throughout all Marx's later writings. In the study of Proudhon, he identifies contradictions in his French colleague's grasp of political economy in the process of developing the critique of political economy. In the *Grundrisse* he elaborates the familiar claim that the inherent contradictions of modern industrial society will lead to crises of overproduction and eventually to its economic collapse.

Capitalism is a social system oriented toward the accumulation of capital through the exchange of commodities for money. In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx brings out the basic contradiction between use-value and exchange value within the commodity, which is situated at the heart of modern industrial society. He discusses the basically contradictory nature of capitalism in much greater depth in *Capital*. In developing the contradiction in the commodity in detail, he adds discussions of fetishism, in which the reality of the relations between capitalists and workers assumes the fantastic, but distorted appearance of a mere relation between things. Other contradictions include those within political economy, such as the general formula of capital; that between the struggle to limit the working day and the desire for ever greater profit; again that between the speed and ease of production following from the introduction of automation and the increased misery for factory workers which ensued; and the contradiction between so-called primitive accumulation which made possible modern industrial society and its effect on the lot of ordinary men and women.

There is an analogy between the relation of Hegel to Kant and the relation of Marx to Hegel. In the same way as spirit is Hegel's positive alternative to Kantian reason, the model of man's self-creation through labor is Marx's concrete alternative to Hegel's abstract, basically logical conception of the negation of the negation. The limit of the analogy is that the philosophical conception of spirit is forged by Hegel; it is not in Kant or preceding writers. But Marx literally finds the view of man's self-creation, which he turns against Hegel, ready-made in the latter.

As Marx reads Hegel, the latter's position harbors an unresolved duality between two different, incompatible models of history. An incorrect, abstract approach to historical phenomena is at work in the logical writings, including the *Science of Logic*. A different, more concrete, correct approach is worked out in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, where Hegel studies man's self-creation as a historical process. In Marx's Feuerbachian reading, Hegel describes human history correctly, but still too abstractly. In adopting the view of the *Phenom-*

enology to correct the view of the *Logic*, Marx defends and develops one strand of Hegel's theory of history against another strand.

The outstanding achievement of Hegel's *Phenomenology* and of its final outcome, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle, is thus first that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of *labor* and comprehends objective man – true, because *real* man – as the outcome of man's *own labor*. (III, 332–3)

Contradiction, Identity, and Commodities in *Capital*

Marx's position culminates in his unfinished masterpiece, *Capital*. It is natural to ask whether Hegel is relevant for that book as well. In this respect, there are very many views, almost without limit. Here are some examples. One view is that it is entirely possible to discuss *Capital* without any reference to Hegel at all.⁴² A second is that Marx turned his back on Hegelian idealism in 1843, but rediscovered it on reading Hegel's *Logic* in 1857.⁴³ A third is that, like Hegel, Marx employs dialectic in *Capital*, but Hegel's dialectic is a mere conceptual sleight of hand.⁴⁴ A fourth is that Hegel's theory is a standard to which, despite its influence on Marx's position, Marx is not equal.⁴⁵ A fifth is that Marx's theory in *Capital* is influenced by but able to withstand Hegelian critique.⁴⁶ A sixth view is Lenin's famous remark that *Capital* cannot be grasped without mastering Hegel's *Logic*.⁴⁷

In an introductory discussion such as this, there is no prospect of settling the question one way or the other as to the precise relation of Marx's theories in *Capital* to Hegel's overall position, or even more precisely to his view of logic. Yet in revisiting Marx's idea of commodities, it is relatively easy to show how he applies a Hegelian form of objective contradiction and dialectical identity, or unity, which he has presupposed all along. An instance is the tendency of the contradictions in capitalism to drive toward revolution in the *Paris Manuscripts*, and much later, as noted, in the account of commodities which lies at the heart of *Capital*.

The point of the Hegelian idea of objective contradiction is that unity underlies, or subtends, a distinction between different, opposing elements. Hegel generally distinguishes between two types of unity, or identity: formal identity, which applies to mere objects of thought, and dialectical identity, in which unity, or identity, underlies or subtends difference between opposing constituents. This claim provides Hegel with the crucial conceptual

machinery necessary to analyze any unstable or mutable object, or system of objects.

In *Capital* Marx applies this approach to capitalism, above all in his analysis of commodities. Marx's conception of commodities builds on both orthodox political economy – Adam Smith, who discusses use-value, devotes two chapters to commodities in *The Wealth of Nations*⁴⁸ – and Hegel. In *The Philosophy of Right*, in the course of discussing the “Use of the Thing” in some detail,⁴⁹ Hegel distinguishes between quantity and quality with respect to a thing⁵⁰ and further specifies that quantity concerns the amount of money for which a product can be exchanged.⁵¹ This Hegelian distinction, which Marx repeats at the beginning of *Capital*, exactly captures his own distinction between use-value and exchange value. Marx builds on the Hegelian distinction between use- and exchange value, which he supplements with a further distinction between types of labor. In Marx's opinion, the distinction between use- and exchange value in respect to the commodity corresponds to a further distinction between, in his words, the two-fold nature of labor contained in the commodity. Use-value is the product of one kind of labor, which is so to speak contained in the thing in a way which meets a human need, and, if one abstracts from use-value, exchange value is also contained in the thing as the average amount of labor power for which it can be exchanged.⁵²

Marx, who does not claim to discover the basic distinction between types of commodity value, claims rather to be the first to notice that labor which results in commodities also has a double nature in creating use-value and in creating value in general, or exchange value. Through the account of commodities, the basic concept in *Capital*, Marx describes an objective contradiction in the deepest recesses of capitalism itself. Capitalism depends on the institution of private property, which depends on the accumulation of capital, and which in turn depends on the sale of commodities in the market. Commodities contain an objective contradiction between use-value and exchange value, between quality and quantity, between the use of the thing which results from the process of production and what can be had for it when it is exchanged in the market. The supposed transformation of one stage of society into another, of capitalism into communism, will supposedly follow upon the ripening of the contradiction situated in the commodity.

Marx's mature theory of the modern world is squarely based on his application of the Hegelian view of objective contradiction to modern industrial society. The contradictions he sees lying at the heart of capitalism, the tensions between the owners of the means of production and others who work for them, the tendency for capitalism to fall prey to periodic crises in the course

of developing into a system in which there will be no private property, etc., are all explained in terms of the ripening of the contradictions concealed in the unity of use-value and exchange value in the thing. The goal of society according to Marx is not only to transcend the contradictions of the capitalist productive process in which surplus value is accumulated, but to transcend the very contradiction lodged in the heart of commodities.

Marxian theory of commodities is a philosophical conception based on the distinction between use-value and exchange value. We see at once two things: how strongly Marx, even in his most economic moments later in his career when he was composing *Capital*, remains wedded to Hegelian philosophical insights, and, if all human societies produce things to meet reproductive needs, which become commodities when they are exchanged, how difficult it is, even for Marx, to conceive of a society beyond the need to exchange products.

Marx and Contemporary Philosophy

So far in this chapter, it has been argued that as a philosopher Marx remains generally within the Hegelian orbit. Marx's philosophical contribution is most often discussed in terms of the relation of theory and practice. This approach is useful, perhaps generally correct, but insufficient. In reducing Marx's intention to a formula or to a few well chosen words, it shortchanges an adequate grasp of Marx's philosophical theories, let alone their relevance today. Like other philosophical theories, the relevance of Marx's cannot be measured in abstract or absolute terms. It can only be evaluated with respect to the contemporary discussion.

Concern with the relation of theory and practice (*praxis*) does not originate in Marx. In different ways, this theme is already strongly present in ancient Greek philosophy.⁵³ In the *Republic* Plato influentially describes philosophy as indispensable to political practice as it was conceived in his time and place.⁵⁴ The idea that philosophy is a necessary condition for the good life in society has remained influential from Plato to our own time. In different ways this idea engages the attention of all the German idealists, each of whom insists on the priority of practice over theory. In our time both Heidegger the Nazi enthusiast and Lukács the Stalinist try to put a modern version of Plato's idea into practice.⁵⁵

Unlike Hegel and others, Marx is not concerned, or at least not centrally concerned, with human practice in its most general forms. He differs from others in his concern to come to grips with human practice in the

distinctively economic form, which dominates modern industrial society. His approach to human practice is resolutely historical. Understood as a historical approach to political economy, the main sector for the realization of human aims and intentions, his approach is extremely powerful. It is worked out in a systematic way through careful critique of leading alternative conceptions. Understood as a philosophical theory of human practice in general, his ideas are suggestive, important, fragmentary, incompletely worked out, never developed in a systematic way, and never tested against a fair range of other philosophical views.⁵⁶

His ideas are most fully worked out in his historical model of modern industrial society. Unquestionably Marx provides a wonderfully well articulated account of a great many aspects of economic practice. Attention to various forms of economic activity, even social practice in general, is not the same as attention to the intrinsic historicity of social life. It is more plausible to say that Marx provides the conceptual bases on which to formulate a theory of human practice in general, but not yet that theory itself.⁵⁷ In that sense, his position remains prolegomenal. As a wide-ranging view of practice, as opposed to economic practice, his theories fall short.

For one thing, modern capitalism is not the only venue for human practice, even if it is currently the most encompassing one. Marx himself very insightfully envisages the extension of human activity in a future society beyond the economic sector. Another difficulty is the relation of economic practice and other forms of practice, which remains an unsolved problem in Marx's theory. The use of a conceptual device to relate, say, legal, philosophical, and other superstructural activities to economic activities could be misconstrued as suggesting that the superstructure is reducible to, or replaceable by, the economic base. This would be like claiming that Isaac Newton, who formulated a theory of celestial mechanics by treating the planets as point-masses, actually thought that planets *were* point-masses. Similarly, it would not be useful to claim that, say, literature is merely a disguised form of economics.

Although Marx does not work out a general philosophical theory of human practice, he contributes powerful philosophical ideas in a variety of domains. There is always room for further debate, and scholars disagree more than a century after Marx's death. But four aspects of his position, all traceable to his concern with history in the wake of the French Revolution, appear philosophically important at present: his critique of political economy, his formulation of a distinctive theory of modern industrial society, his critique of Hegel, and his general view of knowledge.

Marx's critique of political economy from a generally Hegelian perspec-

tive emphasizes the historical character of the discipline as well as a host of more specific points, many of which have been mentioned above. The more general point is that, from Marx's deeply Hegelian perspective, everything human, including economics, is ultimately historical. This suggests the obvious idea that theories of economics, like all other theories, are not immune from, but always subject to, revision. The idea that any theory is beyond the possibility of revision, which Kant claimed about his own critical philosophy,⁵⁸ is simply (the word is not too strong) absurd. There is no reason to think that a claim for unrevisability is true for Kant, for philosophy in general, for economics, or for any field of cognitive endeavor.

A historical approach to economics focuses attention on its relation to the social context. Marx's concern with the effect of economic reality on the hopes and aspirations of men and women is an important theme, which is not usually given enough attention by professional economists.⁵⁹ This topic simply cannot be avoided if he is correct about its implications for the viability of any economic formation. He also usefully suggests that many economists are more concerned with analyzing the health of the prevailing economic system, and suggesting ways to ameliorate it, than in trying to change it in ways that basically improve the situation of individuals.⁶⁰

Marx's formulation of a distinctive theory of modern industrial society is philosophically important. In our time, much thought has been given to formulating a conception of the modern world. Examples include the German sociologist Max Weber's approach to the rise of capitalism as rooted in Protestantism⁶¹ or Heidegger's view that modernity is the result of the turn away from being.⁶² For a brief moment in the 1980s, the concern with "modernity" was ubiquitous in philosophy and literature. It was widely discussed among French so-called postmodernists (Jean-François Lyotard,⁶³ Gilles Deleuze, Derrida, André Glucksmann) and modernists (Jürgen Habermas).⁶⁴ These views pale in comparison with Marx's theory of modern society. In this respect, Marx is very obviously a true giant, the author of the most impressive overall theory of the modern world we currently possess, a theory which, despite its many flaws, really has no obvious competition. Perhaps the only valid comparison is to that other giant, Hegel. The latter gives us an enormously influential theory of philosophy, and, within philosophy, of modern philosophy.⁶⁵ Marx gives us an equally enormous, arguably wider, theory of the modern world as an economic system for the accumulation of surplus value in the form of capital. Marx for the first time provides a credible theoretical framework to comprehend modern life as a whole. In this, he has no real competition, no theory of similar size and breadth with which his own could be compared.

What about Marx's theory of value? Marx's overall theory of modern society in part depends on his disputed theory of surplus value. Detailed discussion of the merits of Marx's economic theories lies beyond the scope of an essay devoted to his philosophical theories.⁶⁶ Marx's concept of value has often been criticized by later economists.⁶⁷ Suffice it to note that his understanding of value has its detractors, but also its defenders, perhaps less for its insight into what capitalism will become than for what it is. For his theory affords us an indispensable insight into who we are.⁶⁸ In revealing the anatomy of modern society as a framework of social relations produced through our actions, centered finally on meeting our reproductive needs, we comprehend the nature and motivation of our actions and finally comprehend ourselves.

Marx's critique and critical appropriation of Hegel are crucial, since Hegel casts such a massive philosophical shadow. Yet despite his enormous accomplishment, Marx remains Hegel's most important, most gifted, most influential student. The argument has been well made that French philosophy since the 1930s has been determined by Hegel⁶⁹ – even that since his death later philosophy is largely composed of a series of reactions to Hegel.⁷⁰ It is a truism that the very greatest philosophers attract attention from different, often incompatible angles of vision. The division among Hegel's followers is still being played out in the debate. Hegel's right-wing admirers still favor a theological reading stressing infinite being⁷¹ to the dismay of those left-wing admirers who prefer an anti-theological, anthropological reading centering on human beings.

The strongest thinkers in Hegel's wake, including Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55), Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), react to Hegel's massive presence.⁷² Kierkegaard, who criticizes Hegel, is a right-wing Hegelian, more interested in God than man, more concerned with returning to God than with understanding man other than through God. Very much like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche is interested in surpassing such ordinary boundaries as ethical rules. Unlike his Danish contemporary, Nietzsche is not concerned with people in general, but rather with exceptional human beings, those who are beyond any rules other than those of their own devising.

Marx stands out among writers of the first rank prominent in Hegel's wake. He is the only one whose work centers not on God, nor on exceptional individuals, nor on fleeing modern life for the ancient world, but on men and women in general in the modern world. The modern world as we know it is the result of a series of three interrelated, singularly important revolutionary events: the Copernican revolution in astronomy which displaced the earth and human beings to a secondary position in the universe;⁷³ the great French

Revolution which called attention to history; and the industrial revolution which made capital the driving force throughout the modern world. Hegel's response to all three revolutions separates his own theories from his contemporaries. He is not directly interested in the Copernican revolution, which he rarely mentions, although he prolongs and develops Kant's so-called Copernican revolution in philosophy. The effect of the French Revolution on Hegel is visible in his decisive shift to a historical perspective. In Hegel's time, no other philosopher was as interested in the social consequences of the industrial revolution as he. His theories combine a dual interest in history and economics in a historical approach to human beings in the modern social context, a context increasingly structured by the rise and evolution of modern technology.

Marx works out the consequences of Hegel's theories for understanding the modern world and ourselves. More than Kierkegaard, more than Nietzsche or indeed anyone else in the immediate post-Hegelian context, Marx helps us to understand the conceptual resources of Hegel's approach to philosophy and modern life. He builds on and develops Hegel's conception of finite human beings, who increasingly meet their needs in the form of civil society which emerged after the industrial revolution, a social stage which Marx saw as historically transient.

It is not helpful to see Marx as flatly contradicting Hegel. It is more helpful to see him as working within, coming to grips with, modifying, correcting, opposing some interpretations and adopting others, and further developing the gigantic framework of Hegel's views. He mainly differs from Hegel in working out, much more than the latter ever does, the paramount importance of the economic sector in respect to all the other components of the modern world, and in linking economics to history. That Marx carries this interest to much greater lengths enabled him to see further down the same road than his great predecessor. Unquestionably, Marx surpasses Hegel and all others in the strength of his grasp of the economic component of modern society. He improves on Hegel in six ways, not all of which can simply be traced to a better grasp of political economy.

First, and most obviously, he works out more than Hegel, indeed more than anyone else, a historical view of the economic structure of modern society. This enables him to formulate a general theory of modern society, something which is sometimes attributed to Hegel, but which is not found in his writings.⁷⁴ Kant still thought that knowledge could be understood through an abstract conception of the subject. As part of the revision of the theory of knowledge after Kant, Hegel understood that knowledge can only be grasped through real men and women. Knowledge requires consciousness of the

object, or what one knows, and self-consciousness, or awareness that one knows. Hegel's analysis of the so-called master–slave relation lays the basis for an understanding of the real conditions of self-awareness which belong to any successful account of knowledge. He sets in motion an anthropological shift which Marx further elaborates in respect to political economy. Yet as soon as one acknowledges that real people are the real knowers, other factors become important, which Marx, not Hegel, begins to elaborate in his attention to what might distort our view of the world and ourselves.

Hegel, who was aware of the link between our philosophical views and our surroundings, suggests in the *Phenomenology* that such philosophical tendencies as stoicism and skepticism are related to the historical moment in which they emerged. Yet he never elaborates the relation, which Marx begins to do. Working with Engels, he addressed the problem of error in revising the conception of ideology.⁷⁵ In discussing ideology, Destutt de Tracy had in mind a general system of ideas. Francis Bacon, who precedes him and who does not use the term, describes the pernicious effects of attachment to false views or idols, mere fictions created by language, custom, and imagination. According to Wilhelm von Humboldt, the language we speak creates a deep-seated view of the surrounding world. For Friedrich Nietzsche, we are led astray by the tendency of the views of the weak to dominate the discussion. Sigmund Freud calls attention to the role of psychological factors in our consciousness of the world. In suggesting that consciousness and self-consciousness are products of the society in which one lives, Marx (and Engels) points to the relation to the economic basis of society as distorting our awareness of it. In this way, Marx participates in a growing tendency to understand that the subject as situated in, hence limited by, its surroundings.

Second, Marx surpasses Hegel in his grasp of the priority of economic over other (cultural) factors. It would be wrong to think that philosophers are uninformed about economics, or that Hegel overlooks this dimension. It has already been noted that Lukács usefully analyses Hegel's deep knowledge of economic reality. It is, however, one thing to grasp that political economy is important and something else to grasp just how important it really is. According to Marx, in a society centrally concerned with the continued accumulation of capital, the economic sector is more important than others. If this is true, then economics is not merely one factor among others, none of which should be neglected. Rather, in a way which simply cannot simply be quantified, the economic factor predominates.

In Marx's opinion, the conception of law adopted in one or another society literally depends on the economics of the situation. It is not by accident

that Locke, the philosopher of capitalism, insisted that private property is more important than life itself. According to Locke, in appropriate circumstances one may take someone's life, but one may never, in any circumstances, take, confiscate, or appropriate his property. Marx's insight is that although the legal defense of property is important, it is still secondary to the economic role of private property within the modern social context. It is obvious that meaningful freedom for all men and women is not attained merely through creating legal structures for the defense of property, or through the promulgation of property rights in the modern state, or even through a theory of justice.⁷⁶ It is only attained when people can achieve substantive freedoms, for instance through growing the means of production so there is enough to go around or through transforming society in other ways in order to lead the kind of lives they value.⁷⁷

Third, Marx surpasses Hegel in his grasp of the relation of economics to history. History can neither be reduced to economics, nor separated from it. Hegel understands that the logic of historical development is driven by contradiction. If he had carried his economic studies further, he would have realized that economic considerations so often lie at the root of historical change. History can be understood in very many ways. It can be written from the peculiar angles of vision of religion, ideology, disease, climactic change, great individuals, royal families, and so on. If Marx is right, then the link between the development of economic contradictions and historical development is a decisive factor in historical development.

Consider, for instance, the French Revolution. An account of the French Revolution which failed to study economic factors in considering the series of events which, by uprooting the established social, political, juridical, and religious structures in France put an end to the *ancien régime* would not be plausible. The French Revolution broke out in a context of international crisis with interrelated economic, social, and political dimensions. It is generally admitted by all observers that it was not an isolated incident, but rather the model of a national bourgeois revolution. Observers further agree that its deep causes lay in the flagrant contradiction in France, at the time a largely agrarian society, between the prevailing feudal social structures and the rise of new productive and intellectual forces.

Fourth, Marx suggests, but does not further develop, an anthropological conception of science. In modern times, especially since Kant,⁷⁸ "objective" has come to mean roughly "not subject-dependent." On that basis, an objective claim to know means to grasp the real, in one version "to grasp what is as it is in independence of the knower."⁷⁹ In insisting on the indispensable role of the subject as the route through which all claims to objective

knowledge must pass, René Descartes (1596–1650) conjoins subjectivity with the modern idea of objective knowledge. This is further developed in Hegel. If Hegel is correct, not only is what we call “objectivity” a historical product, but there is no way to infer from what appears in conscious experience that there is a supposedly mind-independent object outside it.

Marx extends Hegel's anthropological shift in suggesting that all science is finally human science, or part of the sciences of man (B 164; III, 304). This approach turns modern positivism – which aims to “reduce” the human sciences to the hard sciences, and the latter to physics (physicalism) – on its head. The steady aim of positivism is to remove the human element, which is supposedly subjective, in order to leave only objective cognition. This suggests a distinction in kind between those sciences which are independent of human beings and those which centrally depend on them. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), for instance, drew an influential distinction between natural sciences, concerned with explanation, and human sciences, which center on interpretation. If Marx is correct, this distinction holds only on a superficial level. For on a deeper level there is no distinction between different efforts to know the world and ourselves, all of which depend on the fact that the real subject is a finite human being. It follows that all the sciences, including the hard sciences, are human sciences, or sciences of man.

Fifth, Marx surpasses even Hegel in his grasp of the historical nature of the knowing process. Like Kant, like Hegel, like Nietzsche, Marx continues the restriction of claims to know beginning in Kant, which is still spreading throughout the contemporary debate. Kant is an immensely important transitional figure, who both defends but also undermines traditional claims to know absolutely. Philosophers leading up to Kant, and Kant himself, often present clear, but indefensible claims to know absolutely. In the aptly named *Critique of Pure Reason*, in reaction against the Enlightenment cult of pure reason, Kant rejects the unlimited epistemological pretensions of Enlightenment thinkers. He limits claims to know to those which begin in experience, thereby excluding knowledge of the world, the soul, and God. Although there is much confusion about his position, Hegel is a historicist, not an anti-historicist. He is concerned to show that knowledge is human knowledge, and that human knowledge is limited by time and place, indexed as it were to the historical moment. Absolute knowing is unrelated to Cartesian claims to know absolutely, misconstrued as a search for certainty,⁸⁰ best understood as the insight that all claims to know are in the final analysis relative.⁸¹

Marx does not differ from, but goes further than, Hegel in grasping the historical component of human knowledge. Like Hegel, but even more so, he consistently emphasizes that we consciously know only in a way limited by

time and place. Kant, who rejects claims for immediate knowledge, suggests that cognition necessarily begins in experience which is filtered through categories lodged in the mind. Everyone operates with the same categories. The difficulty is to determine the categories in the mind. Kant claims to “deduce” one inclusive, invariable set of categories adequate for all types of experience in all times and places, a categorial set which all people possess and which is “hard-wired” into the mind as it were. In different ways, the problem of the nature and identification of categories runs like a red thread through all the later German idealists, including Marx. As he points out, there is something absurd about claiming that the categories with which we approach knowledge are somehow independent of, but always able to grasp, what we seek to know. If the categories in which we grasp the modern world are to be adequate to the task, they must change as the world changes. From the perspective of knowledge, one of Marx’s most important contributions is to give up the old model of a fixed set of categories in shifting to a rival model of categories which are modified as the world we live in changes.

Marx emphasizes the historical nature of perception. In the *Phenomenology* Hegel convincingly maintains that, since the mind is never merely passive, we cannot separate out what is given in sensation from what the mind adds to whatever is given. This amounts to saying that there is no way to distinguish between sensation, or the experiential input, and perception, or what is perceived. In every perception the mind of the perceiver is active in shaping what is perceived.⁸² This point is singularly important since it is often assumed – for instance in classical British empiricism (Bacon, Locke) as well as in recent phenomenology (Husserl) – that the mind is merely passive. On the contrary, the very idea of a pure given is no more than a myth.⁸³

Hegel shows that we are always active in shaping what we perceive; Marx goes still further in showing that perception is basically historical. In a brilliant passage in the third of the *Paris Manuscripts* (B 159–62; III, 300–2) he points out that, like everything else, even sensory perception is a function of, hence dependent on, human history. The way we perceive is relative to the type of society in which we live, hence subject to historical change. The deep insight that knowledge is inseparable from history, hence intrinsically historical will, I believe, continue to shape discussion in the years to come.

Sixth, and finally, I believe that Marx improves on Hegel with respect to the vexed problem of poverty, as a result of his general theory of the modern world. Philosophers, who like to claim that philosophy is socially relevant, even indispensable, often look away from the real concerns of real human beings. This is certainly one factor in Wittgenstein’s plausible suggestion that

philosophers are mainly concerned with their own problems which do not intersect with those of the rest of us.

Chronic poverty afflicts much of the world, including the main industrialized countries. Poverty is difficult to define but easy to recognize. To begin with, it is always relative. Hispanics in New York who cannot afford a telephone in a city where almost everyone has one must be considered poor. Yet a phone of one's own in a small town in the fourth world would be an incredible luxury. By poverty I have in mind the fact that a country like India is still unable to assure a reliable source of clean water, that in a distressing number of countries the life expectancy is still less than 60, that famine continues to occur although in fact there is enough food to prevent starvation,⁸⁴ and so on.

This dramatic situation mainly affects third and fourth world countries. But it is sadly present, although not to the same degree, in such developed countries as the United States, where the life expectancy of American blacks is astonishingly and very shamefully still less than 60. Another indication of endemic poverty is the rising inequality in the United States at a time of unprecedented prosperity. According to the most recent statistics, in America real income increased broadly from the end of World War II until 1973, but, adjusted for inflation, from 1973 to 1996 average wages have stagnated or declined. It should be a cause of concern that the relative increase in income of the top 5 percent of the population is greater than that for the bottom 20 percent.⁸⁵

Any time inequality is rising in a time of economic expansion, when society is becoming increasingly polarized in terms of those who have and those who do not, when the poorer are becoming relatively and in some cases absolutely poorer, there is a real social problem. Hegel, of course, was not indifferent but rather attentive to the general issue of poverty in modern industrial society. He specifically takes up the need to intervene on behalf of the poor when he discusses charity, the accumulation of wealth in an expansionary period, conditions which favor an unequal concentration of wealth in the hands of a few people, and suggests the idea of public works as a way to provide jobs and dignity.⁸⁶

Since Hegel has no general theory of the modern world, he misses two crucial points. First, unlike Marx, he does not see that the tendency for modern capitalism to leave some people by the wayside is not accidental, but rooted in the heart of a system which functions through the accumulation of capital. Capital can only accumulate if there is a mechanism to take it from some to allocate it to others, as in the disparity between wages paid for the production of use-value and prices paid for the exchange of exchange

value. Second, and for the same reason, he also does not see that the conditions for coming to grips with poverty in poor countries or in the midst of plenty, as in the US, lie in a basic change in the prevailing liberal form of capitalism, in reacquiring human control over the economic sector of society. The difficulty is not that, as is sometimes suggested, as he got older and became well known Hegel abandoned his youthful liberalism and increasingly identified with the Prussia of his day. Rather it is that he lacked the conceptual tools to analyze, in his words, the general causes and means to alleviate poverty. Hence another way in which Marx surpasses Hegel is not in his interest in poverty, but in his capacity, through his general theory of the modern world, to come to grips with it in a concrete way.

I have argued that Marx has always been read through Marxism. I have further argued that now, after Marxism, an opportunity exists to recover Marx, to understand that he is not, as is often held, an anti-Hegelian, but in many ways a Hegelian, in fact Hegel's most profound student. In large part, the history of the discussion since Hegel is a series of reactions to his thought. Marx is one of the most important modern writers, a true giant, an original thinker of great breadth and power, but also a Hegelian, who criticizes, develops, and formulates new ideas in response to Hegel's. When all is said and done, in criticizing Hegel's juridical approach to property as the basis of the modern state, Marx sees that private property is the central element of modern industrial society. Marx's critique of Hegel for misreading property, his critique of (orthodox) political economy for an ahistorical approach, and his own theory of the modern world are inseparably conjoined. His theories are important, indeed a decisive source of insight into modern society and ourselves. Our discussion would be poorer without Marx. It would be unfortunate if, in the rapid disintegration of political Marxism, Marx's ideas were to disappear. After Hegel and certainly after Marxism, Marx's theories remain and will continue to remain relevant for as long as money is in short supply, and as long as problems intrinsic to the modern industrial world, such as poverty, differences in real opportunity between the rich and the poor, and similar economic difficulties, continue to endure.

Notes

- 1 See Etienne Balibar, *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, London: New Left Books, 1977.
- 2 See Maurice Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- 3 In a recent collection of essays, Roemer defines analytical Marxism as

inspired by Marxian questions which are then pursued with the standard tools of logic, mathematics, and model-building which distances itself from actual history, dependent on analytical philosophy and so-called positivist social science. The aim is to work out an up-to-date approach to social science to replace Marxism's nineteenth-century model, which is severely out of date. See John Roemer, *Analytical Marxism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. This volume is, I believe, typical of the analytical approach to Marx, in which Hegel plays a very small role. Depending on how one understands analytic Marxism, Allen Wood, Sean Sayers, and others might count as exceptions.

- 4 For a recent discussion, see Daniel Brudney, *Marx's Attempt To Leave Philosophy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998. Brudney is a good example of the analytic approach to Marx which does not devote any substantive attention to Hegel.
- 5 See E. E. Harris, *Transcendental and Dialectical Thinkings: Logic and Reality*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.
- 6 See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhart, intro. Patricia W. Kitcher, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1996, B 81, p. 111.
- 7 See letter to Marcus Herz, February 21, 1772, in Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Correspondence, 1759–99*, ed. and trans. Arnulf Zweig, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 70–6.
- 8 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xiii, p. 19.
- 9 See *ibid*, B 180–1, p. 214.
- 10 For instance, Hempel's covering-law view of history is a theory of historical knowledge as law-governed, hence as ahistorical. See Carl Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Herbert Feigl and Wilfrid Sellars, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949, pp. 459–71.
- 11 See Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1983, pp. 36–8.
- 12 See J. G. Fichte, *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1956.
- 13 See "spirit" in Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992, pp. 274–7. See further Alan Olson, *Hegel and the Spirit: Philosophy as Pneumatology*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- 14 G. W. F. Hegel, *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Robert Hartman, Indianapolis, IN: LLA, 1953, p. 24.
- 15 See *ibid*, p. 30.
- 16 See *ibid*, pp. 70–1.
- 17 For a critical realist discussion of the difference between Hegel's and Marx's views of contradiction, see Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, London: Verso, 1993, pp. 56–72.
- 18 See Karl Rosenkranz, *Hegel als Deutscher Nationalphilosoph* (1870), Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973.
- 19 "Harmonie, welche den Mißlaut des Widerspruchs zur Einheit umwandelt und die Gefahr der Vernichtung bestanden hat. In dieser Rückkehr zur Einheit

- aus der Entzweiung liegt eine unendliche Affirmation, die den ganzen Reichtum des Wesens in ihrer Seligkeit aufnimmt." Karl Rosenkranz, *Wissenschaft der logischen Idee*, Königsberg: Bornträger, 1858–9, I, Vorrede, p. xxxii.
- 20 See Arthur Schopenhauer, *Über die viervache Würzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1970, p. 4.
 - 21 See Arthur Schopenhauer, "Anhang zur Skizze einer Geschichte der Lehre vom Idealen zum Realen (Parerga und Paralipomena 1)," in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Eduard Grisebach, Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1905–10, vol. 5, p. 31.
 - 22 See Friedrich Adolph Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, Berlin, 1840.
 - 23 He described it as "die Hauptkategorie, das herrschende Wesen unserer Zeit." M. Bakunin, "Die Reaktion in Deutschland," in *Deutsche Jahrbücher* Nr. 247–51 vom 17.21. Oktober 1842, cited from M. Bakunin, *Philosophie der Tat*, ed. R. Beer, Cologne: Henger, 1968, pp. 77–8.
 - 24 See *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. with notes by T. M. Knox, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, §112, p. 78.
 - 25 See *ibid*, §118, p. 81.
 - 26 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1991, §119, Addition 2, p. 187.
 - 27 See G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, New York: American Home Library, 1902, pp. 271ff.
 - 28 See *ibid*, pp. 295–6.
 - 29 See *ibid*, pp. 480–2.
 - 30 See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, bk. Gamma, 4.
 - 31 See Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, §60, Addition 1, p. 107.
 - 32 Hegel, who appreciated Heraclitus, claimed to include every one of the latter's propositions in his own logic. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 18, p. 320.
 - 33 For discussion of Hegel's relation to Spinoza, see Klaus Düsing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983, pp. 160–95.
 - 34 Hegel miscites this slogan several times in his writings. See Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, §91, Addition, pp. 147–8; and G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1969, p. 113. According to Harris, Spinoza never uses this slogan. See E. E. Harris, *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983, p. 122. The closest he comes to it is apparently a passage in a letter. See "Letter L, Spinoza to Jarig Jellis," in *Works of Spinoza*, trans. and intro. R. H. M. Elwes, New York: Dover, 1951, vol. 2, pp. 369–70.
 - 35 See, for a discussion of determinate negation, Justus Hartnack, *An Introduction to Hegel's Logic*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1998, pp. 16–19.
 - 36 See Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 439.
 - 37 For a discussion of Hegel's difficult view of contradiction, see Hartnack, *An Introduction to Hegel's Logic*, pp. 47–9.
 - 38 See Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 440.

- 39 See Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, §119, Addition 2, p. 187.
- 40 See Frederick Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* (= *Anti-Dühring*), trans. Emile Burns, New York: International Publishers, 1970, part I, ch. 13, pp. 142–56.
- 41 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 19.
- 42 See Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Marx: A Reconstruction and Critique of Capital*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- 43 See Henri Lefebvre, *Dialectical Materialism*, trans. John Sturrock, London: Cape, 1974, p. 83.
- 44 See Lawrence Wilde, "Logic: Dialectic and Contradiction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Marx*, ed. Terrell Carver, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 278.
- 45 See Klaus Hartmann, *Die Marx'sche Theorie: Eine philosophische Untersuchung zu den Hauptschriften*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970.
- 46 See Tony Smith, *The Logic of Marx's Capital: Replies to Hegelian Criticisms*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990. Smith claims that until his book, there was no study of the role of Hegelian dialectical logic in *Capital*. According to Smith, who points to Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action* (2 vols., trans. Thomas McCarthy, Boston: Beacon, 1984), and Lucio Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel* (London: New Left Books, 1973), the dominant view is that Hegel's influence on Marx in *Capital* is pernicious. Smith's aim is to show why Marx needed to use dialectical logic, in part because the move from capitalism to socialism in Marx is exactly parallel to the move from the logic of essence to the logic of concepts in Hegel's *Logic*, and then to respond to Hegelian criticism of Marx, above all in Hartmann, *Die Marx'sche Theorie*, and then secondarily in Richard Winfield, *The Just Economy* (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1988).
- 47 See "Conspectus of Hegel's Book *The Science of Logic*," in V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976, vol. 38, p. 180.
- 48 See Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan, intro. Max Lerner, New York: Modern Library, 1937, bk. I, ch. 5: "Of the real and nominal Price of Commodities, or of their Price in Labour, and their Price in Money," pp. 30–46; and ch. 6: "Of the component Parts of the Prices of Commodities," pp. 47–54. Smith is mainly concerned with understanding the intrinsic value of commodities as a function of the labor they represent, as opposed to their monetary price.
- 49 See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §§59–64, pp. 49–52.
- 50 See *ibid.*, §63, pp. 51–2.
- 51 See *ibid.*, §299, pp. 194–5.
- 52 See Marx, *Capital* vol. 1, ch. 1, section 2: "The two-fold character of the labor embodied in the commodities," CW vol. 35, pp. 51–6.
- 53 See Nicholas Lobkowicz, *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx*, Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1967.
- 54 Hegel claims this is not intended as an empty ideal, but as an interpretation

- of Greek ethical life. See Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 10.
- 55 See Tom Rockmore, *On Heidegger's Nazism and Philosophy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
 - 56 Some attempts have been made to do just that, notably in the writings of a number of philosophers in the former Yugoslavia. See Mihailo Markovic, *Dialektik der Praxis*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969.
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 - 58 In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he claims that his Copernican revolution in philosophy has been demonstrated apodictically (B xxii, n. 93, p. 25) and that any attempt to change even the smallest part of his system will create contradictions in human reason (B xxxviii, p. 36).
 - 59 It is, then, significant that the award of a Nobel Prize for economics in 1998 to Amartya Sen, who has been deeply concerned with social inequality, particularly poverty, is the first of its kind. See, for example Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.
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